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HISTORY

OF THE

Mill River Disaster,

IN

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, MASS.



SPRINGFIELD, MASS. :

WEAVER, SHIPMAN & COMPANY, PRINTERS.

1874.



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A
FULL AND GRAPHIC ACCOUNT
OF THE
TERRIBLE
Mill River Disaster,
CAUSED BY THE
BREAKING OF A RESERVOIR
IN
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, MASS.
MAY 16, 1874.
WITH FULL DETAILS OF THE
*LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY AT WILLIAMSBURG,
SKINNERVILLE, HAYDENVILLE AND LEEDS.*

SPRINGFIELD, MASS.:
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1874.

The following pages contain an authentic account, compiled from the most reliable sources of information, with great care and accuracy, of the most devastating visitation ever experienced in New England. Four beautiful villages, reposing in supposed security, in one of those charming valleys with which New England abounds, blotted from existence in a moment, as with the besom of destruction, is a calamity beyond expression or conception. The loss of property, the accumulated savings of a life-time of many of the inhabitants, is appalling,—all gone at one fell swoop,—but when added to that is the indiscriminate destruction of life, the catastrophe is overwhelming. The utter desolation of those late thriving and happy villages is sickening to contemplate. The growth of a century is obliterated in a moment. So thorough has been the destruction that many of the boundaries of real estate are obliterated, and many of the survivors of the disaster are unable to locate the sites of their former habitations. The public ways, the quiet retreats, and the ancient trysting tree, are all gone, as far as the flood could reach, and nothing remains but a gloomy waste of shapeless rocks. Most of those fated families had finished the morning meal, and were just entering upon the duties of the day, with joyful hearts and bright anticipations; when suddenly they were cut off from the land of the living, and the valley of peace and happiness became the valley of death. Who can depict the misery and woe, the destruction, desolation and bereavement, caused by the visitation of that fatal hour? Whole families blotted out, and the places of their abode scattered to the sands; and individuals bereft of all that made life dear. Oh, there remain groans unutterable, sorrows inexpressible, and horrors filled with the blackness of darkness. While we mourn for the departed let us pity the suffering survivors.

“Oh, who can tell, however fair his view.
Through what sad scenes his path may lie?
And who can give to others’ woes his sigh,
Secure his own will never need it too?”

NOTE.—For the material of this narrative we have relied to a great extent upon the SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN, which is so justly commended for its able, graphic and thrilling reports of the disaster, which are singularly correct in all their details. Indeed, we have been unable to find any paper, though we have examined all the ablest of them, which can compare with it for completeness and accuracy. It has not drawn upon imagination, but has stated the simple truth as it is. Besides, we have gleaned from other prominent papers notes and incidents which serve to add interest to the work, which, supplemented by our own personal observations and recollections, will, we think, render it as complete an account of the great calamity as it is possible to obtain.

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DETAILS OF THE DISASTER.

The details of the cause and extent of the calamity are as follows :

About three miles north of Williamsburg village one reaches the ruins of the cause of all this devastation. The scene is an impressive one. All through the center nothing remains of the high wall of stone and earth which rose to a height of 40 feet in the bed of the stream, save the stone-work running at right angles with the dam at the bottom, which enclosed the gate-way. In the very bed of the stream nothing is left, and, even where the water now flows harmlessly along its ancient channel, not a stone remains from top to bottom. A small portion of the eastern part of the reservoir, and a larger section of the western, still remain,—in all, hardly a sixth of the original extent,—broken and jagged on the edges. Above, the eye sweeps over the bed of the reservoir, a tract of 111 acres, covering the northeasterly corner of the town of Williamsburg, near the Conway line. This land, nestled in among the hills, is for the greater part tolerably level, sloping, of course, more or less on every side, and dotted over a large part of its surface with the stumps of trees that formerly occupied it. Below the reservoir the sight is most impressive. The vast mass of water suddenly let loose and dashing down the narrow valley, has wrought such devastation as one would not have believed possible without the sight. The very bed of the stream has been cut in many places below its original course, and for a long distance the valley is dotted—sometimes crammed—with huge rocks torn from the wall of the reservoir, while the trees that in many places lined its banks have quite vanished, and those that marked the outer edge of the torrent are all tattered and torn. Indeed, as one stands on the remaining wall of the reservoir and looks about, the scene is most desolate and impressive.

The ill-fated reservoir was one of a system of dams and reservoirs owned by a corporation called “The Mill River and Williamsburg Reservoir Company,” which included all the manufacturing establishments on the line of Mill river from Williamsburg to Northampton. It was situated on the “east branch” of Mill river, about three miles from the village of Williamsburg and in the northeastern corner of the latter town. The stream which supplied it has its rise only about three miles above the reservoir, and, after joining the “west branch” at the village of Williamsburg, forms Mill river

proper, which flows through Haydenville and Florence, and empties into the Connecticut at Northampton. The reservoir was constructed in the summer and fall of 1865, though it was not filled and used till the following spring. Emory B. Wells of Northampton and Joel Bassett of Easthampton were the contractors, and the cost was \$35,000. A stone wall was first built, which was stipulated to rise from a width of eight feet at the hard-pan to two feet at the top, which latter was 42 feet above the bed of the stream. This wall was contracted to be laid in the best-known cement, and, the projectors claimed, would be as strong as a single shaft of granite. Enveloping this stone wall on either side was a mass of earth, which sloped down on the water side at an angle of 30 degrees, and on the lower side at an angle of 45 degrees. A lateral section of this earthen support measured about 120 feet at the base; the greater mass of which was on the water side. At the center of the stream, inclosed in a stone wall running at right angles to the main wall of the reservoir, ran an iron tube of two feet diameter, for controlling the flow of water, extending of course a few feet beyond this earthen wall at both extremities of its base. This wall of earth, 120 feet wide at the bottom, was 16 feet across at the top, covering the crest of the stone wall a depth of two feet, in order to prevent danger from frost, and along its top furnished a good driveway. The water never rose quite to the crest of the dam, being kept about two feet below that line by means of a waste-way at the western side. The reservoir covered an area of 111 acres, and its average depth was 24 feet.

A little below the reservoir, on the western bank, but out of the range of the flood, stands a small, dismal-looking dwelling, in which lives the gate-keeper. This is George Cheney, a man of about 35, apparently an honest and well-meaning individual. He has held the place nearly three years, his duty being to attend to the opening and shutting of the gates, keep close watch of the condition of the reservoir, and report to his employers anything which seemed to demand attention. It has been his practice upon rising in the morning to go out and inspect the condition of affairs. He went out as usual, Saturday morning, about 6 o'clock. Everything looked all right; the reservoir was full, as it had been for several days, water was flowing out the waste-way on the west side past his house—the gate-way having been closed a fortnight—there was no sign of the impending catastrophe, and Cheney returned to his house: the family, including his wife, several children and his father, sat down to breakfast. They were just finishing the meal when a great noise was heard, and the old man, who was standing at one of the eastern windows, exclaimed, "For God's sake, George, look there!" About 40 feet in length of the bottom of the reservoir on the east side, just beyond the gate, was shooting down stream. Cheney seems to have realized the situation and the emergency at once. With a single eye to the discharge of his duty, and almost, as one would infer from hearing him tell the story, without stopping to consider the danger involved, he rushed down to the gate and let on the water full head, in the hope that this might afford relief and avert the threatening danger. This done, he paused a moment to investigate the condition of the wall where the break had taken place; a glance showed

him that it could hardly fail in a few minutes to give way entirely; streams of water as large as a man's arm were forcing their way through, new ones appearing every moment, the wall was constantly crumbling away, and its utter downfall was evidently only a question of minutes. Cheney rushed up to his house and told his father he was going to the village to warn the people; together they hurried to the barn, a few rods below, and, while Cheney was throwing a bridle upon his horse, his father cut him a stick. Leaping on his horse's back, and plying vigorously his lash, he rode at topmost speed down the road that skirted the stream's bank to Williamsburg, covering the three miles, he thinks, in fifteen minutes. It was then about half-past 7 o'clock. Driving to the house of Mr. Spellman, who had general charge of the reservoir, he summoned that gentleman from his breakfast table to startle him with, "The reservoir is going!" It was but the night before that Cheney had been talking with him about the reservoir, and both had agreed that everything looked all right for the summer. It is not strange, therefore, that Spellman could not at first credit the statement, thought the man a little "scairt," and to his startling communication replied, "No! it can't be possible!" But Cheney quickly told him about the giving way of earth and the streams of water rushing through, and soon convinced him that the danger was most imminent. The first duty was to warn the people further down the stream; Cheney's horse was exhausted, and Spellman told him to go to the livery stable, where again precious moments were lost in convincing the incredulous proprietor that the messenger's story could be true. Here, however, he met Collins Graves, the milkman, on his morning round. "If the dam is breaking," said Graves, after listening to Cheney's fragmentary story, "the folks must know it;" and, lashing his fleet horse into a run he dashed away toward Haydenville, shouting, "the reservoir is right here; run, 'tis all you can do!" It was now a quarter of 8, and meanwhile Belcher and Cheney had rung the bell of the Congregational church to further warn the village folk. On went horse and driver, spreading the alarm, Graves shouting all the way; he made directly for the manufacturing establishments, for, said he, "the people could hear it, but the roar of the factories would drown any warning for the operatives." At Skinnerville the pair were five minutes ahead of the coming torrent; but at Haydenville they had but two minutes in which to spread the alarm. Here the famous ride, which will be sung in story and told to the credit of Collins Graves around the firesides of Williamsburg forever as the salvation of many hundred lives, ended at the hotel; the horse and rider were both exhausted, and here another herald took up the tidings. Graves could hear the thunder of the coming flood, but, not fully appreciating its extent, he turned to go back towards Williamsburg. At the "Dug-way" at Haydenville the disaster which he had predicted burst upon his sight, and he had just time to turn off into a bank near Capt. Kingsley's when it crashed past him; indeed, he was not 20 seconds too soon, and, as it was, he had almost despaired of reaching a place of safety, and had even thought of abandoning

his tired steed to its fate. Graves, by the way, is a Williamsburg boy, and has got a pleasant home on the Hill, out of all danger of floods.

Of course, the onslaught of the water was terrible and grand beyond description; one can only give its results as best depicting its appalling accompaniments. To one the thick coming mass of water seemed like the heaviest ocean waves; to another the sound was like the tearing of shingles from many buildings, while a third heard it as the heavy sullen thunder which succeeds the summer storm. It was preceded and surrounded by a dense spray or fog, dark and thick as the heaviest smoke, while even as far away as the Hill there was an odor like that emitted by stagnant pools. The wave is generally described as 20 feet high, though in one spot its spray washed the branches of a tree 40 feet from the ground. It would be interesting to follow the front of the flood as it thrust itself upon different eyes along the Williamsburg valley; but, taking a representative view from the village as given by Rev. John F. Gleason, we must pass to the details of its progress. Few, by the way, were sufficiently calm to receive distinct impressions, and the almost unvarying summing up of the matter is, "It was so sudden!" Mr. Gleason got up from his breakfast table to see the Adams flouring mill sailing before his window, while his neighbors' houses in the valley below were taken up by the water like chips, to crumble as salt; the trees were mown down like grass, huge bowlders were tossed about by the resistless current, while the waves would savagely play awhile with the barns and shops to grind them to chips and splinters.

The villages devastated of property and of lives were Williamsburg, Skinnerville and Haydenville, in the town of Williamsburg, and Leeds, in the town of Northampton, while the village of Florence, likewise in the latter town, suffered severe property damage, but no loss of life. All these are manufacturing villages, but the three upper ones were especially of uncommonly neat and inviting aspect, while Florence is well known as one of the most beautiful rusurban places in the country. Between and in them lay fertile tracts of alluvial land, on which prosperous and intelligent farmers dwelt. The portion of Williamsburg taken by the immense flood in its way was the southerly. A large flouring-mill on the reservoir stream was the first object of its fury, and when the water reached the valley, instead of following the course of the stream at the base of the hill, it rushed madly forward across to the Main street, and followed that down, taking in its unrelenting course every house it struck, and destroying 25 in all before reaching the top of Skinnerville, a mile below. In thus rioting across the meadow, it cut a new, wide channel, diverting the river from its former bed, carrying the bulk of its current to the other side of the valley, leaving, thereby, H. L. James's large mill without any water-power and quite useless, and covering the intervening flats with sand, rocks and rubbish, to their almost inevitable ruin. This last was the case also at Skinnerville, where the large and first-class silk factory of William Skinner, in which were employed 80 hands, was completely destroyed, his elegant house damaged, and twenty-one houses carried away. At

Haydenville, two miles further, the chief loss, and the largest of the whole flood, was that of the extensive brass works of Hayden, Gere & Co., employing 250 hands, with a building attached containing the savings bank and Masonic hall; and there were also destroyed a small tobacco mill and 23 houses of differing sizes and values. The village of Leeds was utterly ruined as to its Main street, and 17 houses were carried off, besides an old woolen mill (unused), a chapel, and the large button factory of George P. Warner, employing 80 hands, many of them girls. The damage in Florence was to the silk and brush works, both slight in comparison with the larger losses above, and to the flats opposite the village, which were ruined by the stuff fetched upon them. The injury to highways was enormous and almost irreparable by the resources of the towns. Several iron bridges and a few wooden in Williamsburg, Haydenville and Florence villages were carried away, and the main streets of the three villages were all torn through, that at Haydenville escaping with the least damage of any. The iron bridge at the foot of Hospital hill in Northampton was carried away, and dashed against the Canal railroad bridge, which snapped in a moment and floated down some 150 rods on to the meadows. The river road from Haydenville to Leeds was nearly all destroyed.

THE FLOOD AT WILLIAMSBURG.

The released waters came down the reservoir stream with awful force, and, ignoring the old channel to the east, surged against the houses on the Main street leading to the depot, taking off all the houses on Back street, from Adams's mill to Dr. E. M. Johnson's, thus marking out a new channel almost directly south, until it struck the hill, which stemmed the current again to the east. In nearly, if not quite, a quarter of an hour the accumulated water had passed, so that its path could be traced. The valley was forever obliterated, and for its face was the jagged, scarred bed of the destroying stream; the James mill was high and dry, safe, but almost as if built on top of the hill. At present it would seem a most difficult work to train the water back to its old courses, but the town can hardly afford to leave it as it now runs, and it will probably be returned again to its old bed. The picture here was perhaps as striking in its contrasts as any along the path of the flood; for a mile down from the village nothing had escaped unscathed; no green or whole thing was to be seen. Only one or two houses were left on the street; up on the hill-sides were strewn all sorts of household articles, no one of them intact, while, perhaps, protruding near by, would be the bruised and beaten bodies of the drowned.

The blow came upon the village with such abruptness that even the very participants in the terrible struggle with the water scarce realized its import;

they turned out to relieve the saved or to recover the dead with no intense demonstrations of sorrow, but quietly and with studied method. All Saturday, the dead were taken to the town hall and cared for. In the evening a relief meeting was held at the church, and necessary committees appointed for burying the dead, relieving the needy, and soliciting funds, all without the slightest display of sorrow, but with the single eye to doing all that might be done for the situation as it was. The search for the bodies was earnestly prosecuted Sunday, and with good result, some dozen more being brought to the hall, making 30 recovered in all at Williamsburg; all were engaged in it, some of the clergymen working to good effect with the rest.

The value of the property swept from the Williamsburg street is probably about \$100,000; the damage to the meadow land and to the water privilege not entering into the estimate. The number thrown out of employment will probably reach 175, while many are destitute. There were some 25 houses carried away from the Adams mill to the depot, besides the Spellman and Adams mills.

The stream was free of anything destructible until the village was reached, a small house owned by O. G. Hill and occupied by Livingston T. Bartlett being the first to fall; Bartlett, who is a painter, was working at the village, but his wife and step-daughter went down as the first victims. O. G. Spellman's dam, button factory and saw-mill next broke, and Adams' flouring mill fell quickly after, and with it W. H. Adams and T. J. Hitchcock. Spencer Hannum's house was partly smashed; Patrick Scully lost his wife, one child and an aged mother in Hiram Hill's tenement house, while Mrs. Eliza Downing and daughter and Widow Downing, too, went down. W. H. Adams' barn, with cattle, etc., and E. Graves's carriage shop, with contents, were incidentals. Conductor Chandler's wife and daughter and house next went; George E. Lamb's house, with his wife and nephew, and Alexander Roberts, his wife and two daughters; Jeremiah Ward's house, his wife's sister-in-law, Widow Electa Knight, E. C. Hubbard's with Mrs. Wood and babe followed. Mr. Bardwell's house, carriage shop and barn and E. C. Handfield's blacksmith shop were swept off. Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Bartlett and Dr. E. M. Johnson and family went down with their houses; Mr. Raymand's house was destroyed. Some apple trees here saved a small house. Elbridge G. Kingsley, house, barn and wife, and E. D. Kingsley with his wife and two children, were also carried away. Henry H. Tilton's house was partially wrecked, and Widow Snow and his little son were drowned; the Birmingham family in one of the James tenements were lost, as was Mrs. W. D. Adams and son in another tenement. The water came up to the second story of H. L. James's mill, but the current changed, and so it was comparatively little damaged. An unoccupied tenement owned by Dr. Meekins next disappeared; James Murray with his house and sick wife, Michael Burk and James Atkinson, with Dick Cahill's house, barn and cow and Thomas Ryan's house, took the flood on to the border of Skinnerville.



No. 2.

THE FLOOD AT THE RESIDENCE OF MR. SKINNER, OF SKINNERVILLE.

SKINNERVILLE.

Near the Williamsburg station the gathered torrent, with all its burden of crushed houses and barns, trees, logs and stones, brute and human lives, crowded back into the old river channel, which it deepened and broadened as it rushed on, and soon spread out upon the pleasant meadow above Skinnerville. This is a hamlet of a few houses, chiefly occupied by persons employed in the silk mill, but some of them by well-to-do farmers. The center of interest was the silk factory, a solid, handsome building of brick, three stories high and 60 by 130 feet, and, attached thereto, a two-story wooden building, older. The factory was known as the Usquomont mills, was built in 1857 by Mr. William Skinner, and employed 75 or 80 hands, but not a full force was employed at the time of the flood, on account of the dull state of the market. For the same reason, there was on hand the largest stock of raw silk the mill has ever had.

The warning was given quietly enough, and the operatives at first took the matter as a joke. They had but a brief moment, however, to hesitate, and all escaped safely to the railroad bank, some distance off, in which nearly all the inhabitants of the street also succeeded, though some were caught on the way by the water. There they watched the immense wave, folding in its tremendous, clashing arms of timber the solid brick factory, and absorbing it so swiftly that it was hardly possible to realize that it had been there and gone. On its way to this point it had already swallowed some seven houses, and, leaving Mr. Skinner's handsome house with but a temporary harm, it either swallowed altogether, or nearly ruined, twice as many more in this little hamlet alone. Of these houses these twelve belonged to Mr. Skinner: The store just below the depot, occupied by Kinney Waite, the house of James Forsyth, and that of Mr. Smith, the depot master, two boarding-houses managed by Fred Hillman, Jerome Hillman's and Mr. Thomas's, then Mr. Skinner's own house, next below an unoccupied house belonging to Mr. Skinner, James Coogan's and Mr. Thomas Skinner's, then the house of Mr. Hubbard, the book-keeper, one occupied by a Mr. Van Vechten, and a two-tenement house occupied by Messrs. Hibbard and Adams. Besides these, there were destroyed the houses of Thaddens Bartlett, Andrew Breckinridge, Mrs. Risley, Christian Kaplinger, Jacob Hill, George Warner and Capt. Joseph Hayden.

The ruin of Mr. Skinner's property is a matter of peculiar hardship and regret. His career is one of those splendid examples of strong, steady development of a business and reputation, by industry, earnestness and honesty, that are so characteristic of our land. Mr. Skinner came from England, a youth without other capital than his pluck and native force, was employed in the silk mills at Northampton, and presently moved himself and his fortunes to his present location and begun business for himself in a blacksmith shop. He had built this handsome factory and deservedly prospered in it, and a few years ago erected a spacious and elegant house at considerable expense and furnished and appointed it in excellent taste; where, amid

his delightful family, he seemed as enviably situated as is often granted to man. He has simply lost here the results of an honorable and strenuous life-time, and has to start anew, with the valuable capital of his good name alone. His house, by the way, was singularly affected by the flood. Only the northwest corner and the front were injured on the outside, but the tremendous mass of water that found its way into the house, filling the first floor some three feet deep, aided by the undermining of the water in the cellar beneath, broke down the back parlor floor and made a pit into which a whirlpool of waters found exit, and dragged with it every article of furniture in the two parlors, piling a piano on the top. Another strange freak of the flood was played on the house occupied by Mr. Hubbard. It stands now a considerable distance below its place, but shaken nearly to pieces, and the parlor and front hall sliced right out from under the chambers and from beside the other half of the lower floor, as neatly as one would cut a piece of cheese.

HAYDENVILLE.

Two small houses alone preceded at Haydenville the greatest material conquest of the flood, the extensive, long-established and widely known brass works of Hayden, Gere & Co. When the hurrying messenger cried his warning, it was received, as at many places, incredulously, but scarcely a moment passed before the terrible, strange, tumultuous sound of groaning, creaking, crashing timbers, mingled with the wash and echo of mighty waves, told all that it was a serious matter. Coming over the dam, at an especially narrow part of the river, the flood here presented as marked an aspect as at any point in its course. Lifted between 15 and 20 feet above the ordinary level of the river, but with no definite and estimable surface, a chaos of tossing miscellany, beams and rafters, whole roofs of houses, great bunches of hay, clapboards, blinds, fences, trees, an indescribable, struggling pile, on it drove, and seemed to those below who watched it the most wonderful and fearful sight they ever beheld. As it came over the dam, one of the houses just alluded to, used as a lever by the mass of waters, struck the old foundry, shoved it into nothingness, and, continuing, forced a breach in the side of the great building, and, in a moment, as if by magic, the center fell in, the ends folded in together, and the solid structure melted away as if it had been builded of snow. There was no such thing as the substantial before this tremendous force.

This considerable factory originated in 1851, as far as its recent uses are concerned, although manufacturing has been carried on at the spot since 1823, and the late Joel Hayden was engaged in the manufacture of lasting buttons there 17 years before. In 1848 that business was removed to East-

hampton, and in 1851 Joel Hayden and Albert D. Saunders began the manufacture of plumber's brass goods. The company of Hayden, Gere & Co. was formed in 1855, and under that style and title the Haydenville brass works have earned an unsurpassed reputation and credit in their line. The company, as now constituted, consists of Joel Hayden, son of the founder of the business, Collins Gere of New York, and Sereno Kingsley of Haydenville; the shares owned by the estate of the late Joel Hayden, Sr., having been purchased by these three. The whole range of buildings were nearly 600 feet in length, including a building at the south end occupied by the office of Hayden, Gere & Co., the Haydenville savings bank, and, in the second story, by the Masonic hall, which was only finished in 1871. This was one of the most elegant of buildings, finished without regard to cost, with marble inlaid floors, the finest cabinet work of rosewood, mahogany, etc., and probably unexcelled anywhere for a building of such uses. All that is left of these buildings is a fragment of the north end, which was stayed by the tall chimney. The rest is so entirely cleared off that it would be impossible to discover where the buildings had stood, the massive foundations being rocked helter-skelter everywhere. The loss in these buildings was enormous and not readily computable.

In patterns alone, the accumulated capital, as it were, of this peculiar business, there are lost not less than \$60,000; the bank building, when erected, cost \$55,000, and the whole range of buildings could not probably be replaced and stocked for less than \$200,000.

Hayden, Gere & Co. posted notices, Sunday morning, notifying their employes that they proposed to rebuild at once, that all of their men could have employment clearing up the debris, and, if any needed pecuniary assistance, it would be afforded.

There were 220 men at work in the brass works when the alarm came. All escaped save one, a French Canadian boy named Francis Brodeur, who, after reaching the road, in spite of the warning of his comrades, turned back to get his boots, as he had come out in his slippers. He got them and was on his way out, when he was struck in the breast by a timber and knocked over so that when he recovered his feet he could not stem the flood and was soon swept away. On to the houses, slight wooden affairs, the burdened torrent rushed, gathering on the way down the iron bridges, as if they were chips. It tore away stores, tenements and boarding-houses, including these: On the west side of the river, near the dam, a two-tenement house owned by Michael Reynolds and occupied by Edwin Thayer's and another family; Mr. Reynolds's own house, two dwellings, owned by Hayden, Gere & Co., two houses owned by Maj. Cyrus Miller, Sharpe & Ames's stove store, house and grocery of Pierce Larkin, another house owned by Larkin, Chauncey Rice's dwelling, the dwelling and shops of the Myron Ballou property, Robert Cartier's blacksmith-shop, Miss Payson's house. On the east side, five tenements, owned by Hayden, Gere & Co., John Kaplinger's house, H. Hart's barber shop, the Hayden block of wooden tenements, the houses of Deacon Elam Graves, Mrs. Deacon Ives, a large boarding-house, Mr. John Page's house, Mrs.

Phillips's small house, and a fine barn, with hay and grain, belonging to the hotel kept by Luther Loomis & Son.

Besides these buildings there was carried away from the western side of the river, below the village, the factory of the Hayden tobacco company. The company consists of Joel Hayden, president; A. R. Morse, treasurer; F. E. Bates, agent; F. S. Chapin, Superintendent; Samuel W. Hayden, clerk; and their loss was total, reaching about \$75,000. The Hayden manufacturing company, another stock concern, running a cotton mill from this water power, one of the best on the stream, sustained no damage to that mill, but the gas works, from which they supplied the village as well as themselves, which were situated just south of their mill, were utterly destroyed, the brick wall being broken to fragments, and the gasometer crushed to a shapeless mass. Damaged, but not in any degree ruined, were the buildings of the Hayden foundry and machine company, in the village, where steam heaters, etc., are manufactured, W. H. Hayden being the lessee; the loss being perhaps \$3000. An instant sufficed for the destruction of everything touched by the mountainous flood, which rolled on in its appalling force a briefer time than many a dream, speedily became exhausted, and in an hour the river had nearly subsided to its wonted bed, and the citizens walked their streets once more and begun the dread search for the dead. The river flats and all the banks were crammed with debris. Great drives of timber, trees, intermingled in the strangest, most shocking way with women's clothing, less often men's, with mattresses, quilts and sheets, with belting and machinery from the mills, with fragments of bills and letters, with soap and potatoes and stove wood, with rocks and stone steps, with fragments of chairs and tables, and now and then a piece of a piano or cabinet organ, with little children's hats and tiny shoes, with household utensils and all the fragments of manufacture and domestic life—these, with now and then a poor horse, with agonized mouth and staring eyes, or a faithful ox or cow—and, most horrible and soul-harrowing, bruised and disfigured, sometimes maimed, bodies which so short a time before had been in full flush of life—these were the ever recurring picture.

The double-tenement house of Michael Reynolds, on the west side of the brass works dam, was safely emptied of its tenants save two little children. Edwin Thayer's wife, with four children, was in the house when the flood came, and safely escaped with two children at the back of the house. Two children, perhaps not comprehending her, perhaps stupefied with fright, did not follow, but remained in the upper story, and their cries for rescue as they were plainly seen for a little while at the windows, were terrible to the helpless on-lookers from the banks above.



HAYDEVILLE, VIEW SOUTH, SHOWING RUINED TENEMENT HOUSES



THE FLOOD AT LEEDS.

The news of the approaching disaster was brought to Leeds by Myron Day of Haydenville, who drove down in an express wagon, lashing his horse to a foam and barely keeping ahead of the seething waves. Mr. Day, in his anxiety to save others, came near losing his own life by driving directly into the steep defile on the east side of the river, and nearly opposite the silk factory, before noticing the flood, which was almost upon him, making an exit by the road in which he entered the valley impossible. His next thought was to cross the river, and make his escape on the west banks, but a glance in that direction showed the bridge crossing the stream at that point already tottering, and the water upon him. By a sudden effort, however, he wheeled sharply up-hill, and, crossing the railroad, escaped to the hill road toward Florence, with his horse disabled by the chase.

The flood as it came tearing down from Haydenville to Leeds, took its course directly in a line with the main road, built very substantially on a river wall, which was almost entirely undermined and swept away, leaving an impassable rocky ledge. This road was constructed at great expense, and will hardly be rebuilt. The first obstruction to the waves, as they neared the village, was the dam of the Nonotuck silk company, which shivered for an instant and then gave way, and with it went a portion of the pen-stock of the Nonotuck silk company's mill. The course of the flood at this point veered slightly to the west, sweeping below the silk factory, a portion of which it scarcely grazed, carrying off one or two small buildings, and destroying or damaging a large amount of stock. The company will resume business as soon as the necessary repairs can be made, which will require considerable time. One of the shops on the same side of the stream, owned by the silk company and occupied by the Northampton emery wheel company, although considerably wrecked, still remains and will be repaired as soon as possible. The machinery as well as a large amount of stock was badly damaged, making a loss of perhaps \$4000. On the east side of the river and near the head of the main street stood a large, substantially-built boarding house owned by the Nonotuck silk company and kept by Capt. Vaughn, who was also the station agent of the railroad. Mr. Vaughn was in the building when the floods came and could easily have saved himself when the alarm was first given, but in waiting to assist others he lost his own life. The torrent dashed on through the street, spreading itself through almost the entire width of the valley in which the village is situated, and partially or entirely demolishing every building in its path. An old unoccupied woolen mill, owned by the Nonotuck silk company, and situated near the head of the street on the west side, crumbled without a struggle, while the Congregational chapel, a little further south, was lifted from its foundations and borne bodily away. Still further to the south, on the right of the street, the water struck one of the button mills (a large wooden structure 100 feet long) of George P. Warner, which swung

around to the west and floated away, barely clearing the brick mill, (a structure of the same length, but three, instead of two, stories high) beyond. The latter, although very substantially constructed, exhibited one of the most sudden and singular downfalls on the line of the flood, it being only able to withstand the pressure for an instant, when it dissolved, every portion appearing to crumble at once. It is estimated that about half of the persons who perished in this village were employes in the button factories. Many of them were so bewildered that, instead of fleeing to the banks on the east, where they would have been safe, they rushed into the street, some running away from the flood, while others, intent on reaching their homes, met their doom half way.

The damage to property in the village of Leeds was as sweeping and severe in proportion as in the villages which the flood had before swept. The most important item was the destruction of George P. Warner's button factory, which was built on the site of the old mills of Critchlow & Co., burned, some years ago. The factory erected by Mr. Warner, three years since, consisted of a handsome brick building, three stories high, with a central tower, in which vegetable ivory buttons were manufactured, and a wooden building of two stories, containing no power, and used for the carding and packing of buttons and the making of boxes, each structure being 100 feet long. A large dry-house, stored with a large stock of ivory nuts, was back of the mill. Everything of this mill was swept but the chimney. Mr. Warner's loss is entire, and is not less than \$100,000, including his tenement houses, mentioned below. The dam below the bridge, one end of which was carried away, belonged to the Nonotuck silk company of Florence, a branch of whose factory is situated on the west bank of the river, and is stopped until the pen-stock, part of which is torn away, can be repaired. An unoccupied wooden building known as the old woollen mill, which was carried away, and an old building leased (with others) by the Northampton emery wheel company, which was considerably damaged, were the property of the silk company, as well as the houses mentioned hereinafter. The loss of this company must be reckoned from \$25,000 to \$30,000. The houses carried away or damaged are as follows: On the east side of the river, a large boarding-house owned by the Nonotuck silk company and occupied by Capt. T. F. Vaughn; an old grist mill and office, owned by Nonotuck silk company; engine-house, containing one hand-engine; house, owned by George P. Warner, occupied by Frederick Yeatman; double house, owned by Geo. P. Warner, occupied by Edward Hannan and Edwin Pelton; fine dwelling house, two barns and an ice-house, owned by William F. Quigley. On the west side of the river—large dwelling-house, owned by the Nonotuck silk company, occupied by Mrs. Dundee, Mr. Eggleston and Mr. Harley; dwelling-house, owned by Nonotuck silk company, occupied by Paul Norris and Martin France; house, owned by George P. Warner, occupied by Anthony Davis; large double house, occupied by Thomas McBride and James Kennedy; house, owned by Nonotuck silk company, occupied by Walter Humphreys, Mrs. Hosley and Mrs. Sarah Bonney; house, occupied by Louis

Bronette and Mrs. Patrick; Congregational chapel; house, occupied by Mrs. Fitzgerald; house and store combined, owned and occupied by Andrew Fennessey; estimated loss \$7000.

On the east side of the street the houses, many of them large double tenements, were packed quite closely together, and all of them were swept entirely away for more than half the length of the street. So thoroughly obliterated are all traces of the foundations that the former occupants are unable to locate their old homes, but stand and gaze at the flood swept grounds in utter bewilderment. The neat residence of William F. Quigley, one of the selectmen, was badly shattered, the main building being torn from the L and deposited in the mud, several rods away. Much rich furniture, including a fine cabinet organ, was ruined. A splendid barn, 72 by 40 feet, with a large shed adjoining, a horse barn, 36 by 28 feet, and an ice-house, and other out-buildings, the whole the property of Mr. Quigley, were also entirely demolished. The live stock in the buildings, consisting of three horses, two cows, two calves and eight hogs, were all drowned, and the loss, including the destruction of houses, farming tools, etc., is estimated at not less than \$10,000.

FLORENCE.

Florence only suffered in loss of property, and that was trifling compared with the general desolation that marked the track of the flood nearer the reservoir. Some time before 9 o'clock in the morning the people of Florence received a telegram from some point above announcing that the reservoir had given way, and warning them to prepare for the visitation of the flood. The tidings had hardly been announced when the torrent appeared. It came upon them like a tidal wave, mad, fierce and appalling, the first rush of waters forming a wall from six to ten feet in height, laden with the debris of bridges, houses, factories, fences, etc. In an instant, as it were, the three bridges in Florence were swept away, and the stream had submerged all the meadows and flooded the basements of the residences in the vicinity. All the fences on the low lands were swept away, and much of the rich alluvial meadow in the village covered so deep with sand as to render it well nigh worthless. The damage in this respect was serious, the fine farm of Austin Ross, by far the best in the neighborhood, suffering severely from the amount of sand and gravel thrown upon it by the flood. At least 100 acres of his best alluvial soil is thus covered from four inches to two or three feet in depth by this deposit. A large proportion of his fences are also swept away. S. A. Bottum, A. T. Lilly, Solomon Phelps, Bela Gardner and other owners of meadow land suffered similar loss, the damage to the meadow land in Florence, altogether, aggregating from ten to twenty thousand dollars.

The Nonotuck silk company, in addition to their loss of \$30,000 at Leeds,

have had the gable and L of their mill torn away and two machines ruined, a third being much damaged. Two small out-buildings and the dye-house were also carried off. The damage to buildings is reckoned at \$4000, to machinery \$1500 to \$2000, and to silk by water and mud \$2000. Their wood-yard was also ravished of 50 to 100 cords of wood. The lower floor of the Florence manufacturing company's building was also flooded, the boiler and engine being under water. Mr. O. C. Warner occupied a part of this story as a file manufactory, and he suffered considerable loss. The large ice-house filled with ice, on the south side of the river below the iron bridge, was swept away, resulting in a loss to the owner of near \$2000.

Scores of cellars and lower floors were filled with water, causing damage that it is hard to assess. Fortunately, no loss of life attended the disaster in Florence. The river in Florence reached a point from four to five feet above the highest water-mark, and the rise was so sudden that people had hardly time to escape from their residences before they were flooded. The fall of the water was nearly as abrupt, one single hour working the appalling catastrophe that will be remembered with tears and anguish for many a long year. The amount of flood-wood distributed along the banks of the river and on the adjacent meadows is simply enormous. Acres and acres in the aggregate are covered with dismantled buildings, bridges, fences, etc., in many cases from 6 to 12 feet in depth.

NORTHAMPTON.

It was about half-past 8 when the news reached Northampton by telegraph from Williamsburg, and in a short time, notwithstanding the cold, heavy rain, the banks of the river, the bridges and every available space were lined with people. At Bay State village, the Northampton cutlery company's works suffered no particular damage, but the screw shops suffered a loss of about \$1500, although a few moments more only of high water would have caved out the cutlery company's canal, which is a long and costly one, the banks having begun to wear away. The Vernon Brothers of New York, whose paper mill was next below on the river, lost a part of their dam, and had the lower stories of their mill flooded, suffering considerable damage. At the Clement & Hawks hoe shop the river made a new channel, about 70 feet wide, for itself around the westerly end of the dam, cutting through the hospital meadows for that purpose and carrying away a deserted ice house. The grinding, forging and tempering rooms of the company were filled with water to the depth of about five feet. Hicks's foundry, just below, was started from its foundations, and the south side collapsed, making the building a complete wreck. The water then lifted the iron bridge at the foot of Hospital hill from its foundations. This struck the bridge of the New Haven and Northampton

railroad, a few rods below, taking that away. The latter bridge lodged on some flats, 150 rods below, but the iron bridge went crashing under the South street bridge, catching on the lower side, and hanging there.

NAMES OF THE LOST.

The following is believed to be an accurate list of the names of the lost, for each village :

AT WILLIAMSBURG.

Mrs. Livingston T. Bartlett and Viola B. Collyer, her daughter.	Michael Burke.
T. J. Hitchcock.	Three children of James Burke.
William H. Adams.	Frederick Bird.
Widow William Snow.	James Stephens.
Mrs. William Carter.	Mrs. W. D. Adams and her son Wil- lie.
R. J. Lancour.	Mrs. Eliza Downing and her daugh- ter.
Mrs. E. M. Chandler and her daugh- ter May.	Widow Downing.
Jeremiah Ward.	Henry Birmingham, wife and three children.
Widow Electa Knight.	Mrs. E. G. Kingsley.
Mrs. Patrick Scully and 2 children.	Mrs. E. D. Kingsley and 2 children.
Widow Mary Brennan.	Dr. E. M. Johnson, wife and three children.
Alexander Roberts, wife and 2 chil- dren.	Widow Johnson.
Mary Ann McGee.	Frank Murray and wife.
Mrs. George E. Lamb.	John Atkinson.
E. C. Hubbard.	Spencer Bartlett and wife.
Mrs. Merrick Wood and child, of Chicopee.	George Ashley.

Whole number, 57.

AT SKINNERVILLE.

Mrs. Jerome Hillman.	Eli Bryant.
Mrs. Jacob Hill.	Robbie Hayden.

Number lost, 4.

AT HAYDENVILLE.

Mrs. Noyes.	Mrs. Posey and 3 children.
Mrs. Johanna Williams.	Mrs. Messie and 2 children.
Joseph Brodeur.	Mrs. Napoleon Bissonette and infant.
John L. Kaplinger.	Stephen Kelley and wife.
Mrs Hogan.	Two children of Edwin Thayer.
Edward Mockler.	Agnes, George, and Willie, children of Samuel Miller.
Mrs. John Wilson and 3 children.	

Number lost, 26.

AT LEEDS.

Mrs. Patrick.	Patrick T. O'Neil.
Charles Patrick.	Alexander Laney.
Julia Patrick.	Ralph Isham, 26.
Mary Patrick.	Ira Dunning, 72.
Mrs. Dunlea, 80.	Samuel Davis.
Mrs. Robert Fitzgerald, 45.	Arthur Sharpe (boy).
Charles Fitzgerald, 21.	Mrs. Edward Hannon and four chil-
Anna Fitzgerald, 7.	dren.
Lottie, Bertha and Tommy Fitzger-	Mrs. Hurley, 60.
ald.	Mrs. O'Shaughnessy.
Terry Dundan, 9.	Mrs Sarah J. Ryan and child.
Two children of John Clancy.	Mrs. Jane Cogan.
Andrew Fennessey, his mother, wife	Annie Cogan, 22.
and daughter Ella.	Grace Cogan, 18.
Mrs. Louis Bronette and four chil-	Caroline Bonney, 17.
dren.	Eveline Sherwood.
Mrs. James Fennessey and two chil-	Mary Woodward.
dren.	Mrs. Mary Bagley.
Eliza Charpentier.	Capt. T. F. Vaughn, 36.
Mary Rouse.	

Number lost, 51.

All but two or three of the above have been recovered.

A More Particular Notice of Some of the Victims.

Most prominent among the victims at Williamsburg was Dr. E. M. Johnson, 36 years of age, the village physician; and it is a curious fact, by the way, that he had perfected plans for visiting New York, Saturday, intending to place himself under medical treatment, necessitated by his close attention to his professional duties. He was seen rushing out of his home toward a place of safety with two of his three little children, his wife, who was a native of Frederick, Md., carrying the other; but the whole family were overtaken by the flood, and lost together. Dr. Johnson came to Williamsburg after the close of the war, in which he had served as surgeon. He formerly lived at Feeding Hills, being a nephew of Dr. Bell, well known in that region, and graduated at the New York college of physicians and surgeons in 1862; he was conscientious and ambitious in his work, universally beloved, a rising man in his profession, of which he was the only representative in the village. He was a deacon in the Congregational church, and prominent in religious matters.

The character of those lost at Williamsburg was certainly exceptional in the history of such disasters; they were not a foreign population—simply

mill hands—but a good average representation of our New England population. From the Orthodox churches are thus taken away many “pillars,” while the town loses men who were prominent in its direction.

T. J. Hitchcock, who was lost with Mr. Adams, was at the village when the warning came, and, first seeing to his wife, he ran down toward the mill to apprise his uncle, Mr. Adams, of his peril, when he was overtaken. He was formerly assistant postmaster at Williamstown, then an insurance agent, and latterly with his uncle in the flouring business; he was a brother of A. P. Hitchcock, of the Boston Journal, and leaves a wife at Williamsburg.

Mrs. Roberts was the leading singer in the Congregational choir, and it is mentioned that the last hymn which she ever sung in the church was that beginning, “There is a land of pure delight,” etc.—Conductor Chandler is, indeed, most sadly bereaved; he went out on his train on the New Haven and Northampton railroad, Saturday morning, and then saw for the last time his family and home. A trunk belonging to him was recovered from the debris, but it contained nothing which he could value save his little girl’s hood, which is all that remains to him of the lost.

W. H. Adams, whose flouring mill was one of the first buildings to fall, was lost, with his assistant, Mr. Hitchcock. Mr. Adams, hearing of the coming disaster, went down to his house, and, warning his family, “The reservoir has broke!” attempted to regain the mill, when he was met by the coming wave and swept away. His house, and his family within, were almost miraculously saved, the house of Hiram Hill, which stands in the track of the flood, breaking its force. Mr. Adams was about 55 years of age, and formerly ran a flouring mill at West Chesterfield, coming to Williamsburg about four years ago.

One of the saddest cases was that of the H. Birmingham family—father, mother and three daughters, all swept away together. The family were all at breakfast when the water struck their house. Mr. Birmingham was superintendent in the James mill, and his daughters, Mary, Lillie and Carrie, were aged 19, 14 and 8 respectively; Miss Mary was a teacher in the South street primary school at Northampton, and had come home to spend the Sabbath. It was a most lovable family, and their unwarned death forms one of the most touching scenes of this terrible disaster. Mr. Birmingham was formerly a member of the Hinsdale woolen mill firm of Birmingham Brothers, and was well known in western Massachusetts.

Eli Bryant, about 60 years of age, who was one of the victims of the flood at Skinnerville, was a native of Chesterfield, where he had lived till within a few years. He had been struck by lightning, and survived the fiery ordeal only to meet a death equally terrible. Driven from his field to the house by an approaching thunder-storm, and, while passing along the highway, a bolt struck him, singeing off his hair and beard, rending his clothing and tearing his boots from his feet, but, strangely enough, inflicting but little injury to his person. His physical powers were only temporarily paralyzed, and he was soon able to resume his walk homeward. He was passing over a mineral ledge, which cropped to the surface at that point in the highway where the

bolt struck him, and as there was neither building, tree nor shrub in the vicinity it is supposed that the electricity merely made use of him as a conductor to some stronger magnet beneath the surface.

TOTAL LOSS OF PROPERTY.

The figures for Williamsburg foot up \$154,300, including \$17,700 for furniture, \$12,600 for clothing, \$6100 for tools, teams and wagons, and \$7000 money and bonds lost. The losses at Skinnerville aggregate \$247,200, including \$12,255 for furniture and \$12,695 for clothing. The Haydenville losses will vary little from \$345,000, exclusive of furniture and clothing. Leeds reports a loss of \$107,600, not counting in clothing and furniture. The grand total for the four villages by this reckoning is \$954,100, which the additions for clothing and furniture destroyed in Haydenville and Leeds will swell to fully one million dollars. This does not include the damage to roads and bridges, which is put at about \$115,000 in the town of Williamsburg and \$80,000 in the town of Northampton, nor the land damages all along the course of the flood. The Williamsburg losses in detail are as follows: Eleven houses owned by H. L. James, totally or partially destroyed, including damages on woolen mill, \$19,800; O. G. Spellman's flouring and saw mill, with stock, entirely destroyed, \$18,000; Prosper Merrill's flouring mill, run by William Adams, \$17,000; private houses and barns, \$56,100; furniture, \$17,700; clothing, \$12,600; tools, teams and wagons, \$6100; money and bonds lost, \$7000. At Skinnerville William Skinner's losses are: Factories, including steam power, stone work, etc., \$40,000; machinery, \$27,000; stock in mill, \$70,000; damage to 15 houses—13 of which were ruined—including land damages, \$45,000; water privilege, \$10,000, making his total, \$192,000. Other losses at Skinnerville were: S. K. Waite's store and goods, \$7000; houses and barns, \$23,250; furniture, \$12,255; clothing, \$12,695; total, \$55,200. Hayden, Gere & Co. of Haydenville estimate their losses as follows: Office and bank building, \$49,000; brass-works, \$52,000; dam, \$6000; tools and machinery in brass-works, \$43,000; goods, raw, wrought and in process, \$75,000; patterns, \$45,000; 14 tenement houses, \$18,000; total, \$288,000. The Hayden manufacturing company, of which Joel Hayden is president, loses \$10,000 by the destruction of their tobacco factory, while three double and four single tenement houses, which were completely demolished, were valued at \$16,800; the damage to the cotton factory and stock was about \$2000. The gas works owned by this company, and situated just below the cotton mill, were a complete wreck, and will probably not be rebuilt. The works were thoroughly constructed, and furnished gas for the street lamps and many of the residences. The cost of repairing the dam, about one third of which was swept away, will not be far

from \$1500. This dam was one of the most securely constructed on the stream, being built between ledges of solid rock. George P. Warner, the button manufacturer at Leeds, finds his exact loss to be \$59,800—a little less than was at first estimated—divided as follows: Brick factory, \$23,000; wooden factory, \$5,000; machinery, \$11,500; finished stock, \$5000; raw stock, \$6000; four double and two single tenement houses, \$9300. The Nonotuck silk company's losses at Leeds are: Two dams and embankment walls, \$10,500; boarding-house and furniture, \$7000; 5 tenement houses, \$5300; two blacksmith shops, old mill sheds and office, \$2000; lumber, \$1000; stock in old mill, \$3000; total, \$28,800. The Northampton emery-wheel company's loss was \$2000. Other losses in Leeds were: Destruction of the village engine-house, \$600; Congregational chapel, \$2200; Mrs. Dunlea's house and contents, \$2400; Andrew Fennessey's house and store combined, and livery barn and contents, \$9500; Mrs. Cogan's house, barn and contents, \$2300.

INTERESTING AND THRILLING INCIDENTS.

WONDERFUL ESCAPE OF A WOMAN.

A most wonderful rescue—and probably the only one of an adult person from the flood itself at Leeds—was that of Mrs. Mary C. Harding, a sister of Miss Marcia Clark of Springfield. She was at work on the second floor of the silk factory when the alarm was given, and hardly had she reached the ground when the shout was raised. "Run across the bridge!" She started, leading the whole company, but soon the cries were of another sort, and "Come back" and "Don't go over!" were sounded on every side. It was too late for Mrs. Harding, though—she was on the bridge, and going back was as perilous as running forward. She ran as a woman seldom ran before, and no sooner had she, and perhaps half a dozen others, reached the farther shore, than that immense mass of debris struck the bridge, and it went down with a crash, carrying with it six or seven girls and women who were just a little too late. The woman kept on, running for Ross's store, and making, as she avers, pretty good time, while her companions who had crossed the bridge entered the fated boarding-house. She passed the little gate near the bridge, and just got through the larger gate below the steps leading to the store, when the water rushed up, carried off the gate and threw her down near the lower stair. Luckily two men were on the bank, and she was drawn up, but not a moment too soon, for just then the steps went off, and the three had to seek safety higher up the shore. The escape from the bridge, from the descending debris, from the chance of entering the house as her companions did, and from the water afterward, make Mrs. Harding's case a most marvelous one. She only of all the 13 who started over the bridge was saved. It so happened that one of her rescuers was Willie Swift, the lover of her room-mate, Mary Wood-

ward, who was swept away in the tide. Mrs. Harding lost everything she had, her property being in the boarding-house, but, thoroughly drenched and somewhat bruised as she was, she went pluckily to work, spending most of the afternoon attending to the dead and the bereaved living.

All along the course of the flood there were narrow escapes and thrilling experiences. Mr. H. H. Tilton of Williamsburg was carrying his aged mother, Widow Sarah H. Snow, to a place of safety, when the unrelenting waters seized them; she was carried away, while he grasped a tree, about 15 feet high, standing on a bank, and was saved, though the waters reached and swayed him. Messrs. Hannum and Rhoades, living in the same house, got across the street into another dwelling, the lower story of which was flooded, but some apple trees broke the force of the wave, and the house stood.

One of the most striking escapes was that of the little son, George, of Engineer Alexander Roberts of Williamsburg. The family lived in a two-story house, which was lifted up by the torrent and carried bodily a distance of about 100 rods, the family meanwhile keeping together. Suddenly the house broke in pieces, and the boy lost sight of the rest of the family, who disappeared from view. The boy floated on some timbers of the house a ways further, and was finally rescued, though in a sad condition of body and mind.

Jeremiah Ward thought to save his sister-in-law, Mrs. Knight, and died with her.—A daughter of Spencer Bartlett started to flee with her parents to the Hill, but the incoming waters tossed them away, and she was compelled to remain in the house, and so escaped.—Willard Williams heard of the flood at the village, and barely saved his wife, his house being entirely taken.

Two large boilers were in use at Hayden & Gere's brass manufactory, one of them carrying 70 pounds of steam on the morning of the flood, while the other was cold. The heated boiler exploded with a terrific report, while the other was carried over 600 feet and landed in the yard in front of Joel Hayden's residence.

Mr. Raymond, employed in Mr. James's mill, saw his house sail by, and, of course, expected that his family were with it, but they, not a second too soon, hearing the roar of the impending flood, had escaped to a knoll, some four rods in the rear of their home.

Mr. S. Gage, the head machinist at James's mill, interestingly tells his experiences. He was in the basement of the mill, when the cry came. "Run for your lives; the reservoir has broke!" Then some 25 of the operatives passed over the bridge to the hill, about eight rods distant, only just quick enough, for the structure crumbled almost under their feet; one second more, he says, would have swamped them.

Three men—J. M. Stephenson and two new hands, whose names are not known—fearing the boarding-house in which they were with a number of others would give way, despite the entreaties of their associates, left it and climbed an apple tree near by. The latter fell under them and they were drowned, while those at the boarding-house remained unharmed. One man ventured upon the roof of the boarding-house, and, though it crumbled under

him he clung to it and saved his life. John Atkins, foreman of the weaving room, died in saving the lives of his wife and two children.

A cow floated down from Williamsburg to Florence, and escaped with only a broken horn.

One of the saddest cases was that of three French children, none of them over nine years old, who sat among the living and dead in Mr. Warner's house at Leeds, and told questioners that they had lost three sisters, a brother and their mother, but their father was safe and attending to some of the dead people. But many who listened to them knew that the father, as well as the brother and sisters, were among the dead, yet none had the heart to break the terrible news to the children. Two of the little ones have been adopted by Mr. Hallett, one of the overseers of the silk factory.

One lucky little boy got a safe ride down the stream in a small house. The dwelling was picked up by the flood, somewhere between Leeds and Florence, and went over the dam right side up, landing some distance below on the flats. There somebody spied this novel conveyance, and took the boy out, safe and sound.

One of the saddest casualties among the lower classes was that of Mr. Edward Mocker, an aged Irishman living near the bridge at Haydenville. He was standing in front of his house when he discovered the water approaching, and in trying to enter and save his old wife and a helpless boy he was overpowered by the flood and drowned. Mrs. Mocker grasped the youth in her arms, and struggled for dry land, but was twice knocked down and badly wounded by floating rubbish, but although badly wounded she clung to her invalid boy, and stood waist deep in the water for an hour until the flood subsided. Men then came to her rescue, moving her to comfortable quarters, but in moving the boy he was by some means dropped in the road, and this, with the exposure and shock, it was thought, would shortly cause his death. The boy fell on the ice, last winter, spraining his ankle, and, being unable to move, his legs were frozen before being discovered, and he has been a helpless invalid ever since. The mother's lament, Saturday night, when applying at the town hall for bed-clothing, was most piteous. After describing her husband's vain attempt to reach her, she recurred to her sick boy. "Oh!" cried she, "that I should live to see this night! An' the boy cried to me, 'Sure you won't leave me, mother, to be carried in the flood,' an' I rushed and snatched him out of bed, and got out between the houses, and as God hears me I couldn't get farther, an' I stood there an' the boy in my arms an' the water going over me. And I was knocked from here wid a timber that hit me on my leg and again in the breast, but I'm alive and I saved the boy, but he'll die the mornin', an' the man's gone. Edward's gone. Oh, but for the rainy mornin', he'd been here at work and saved. Oh, my darling, my darling, God help us."

The fatal mistake of those who got out of the button factory was in attempting to escape by the carriage road that runs along on the flat; if they had struck immediately for the railroad on the high bank, they would have been alive, to-day.

Mr. Dunning, after floating nearly a mile on a pile of debris, gained a tree-top and was saved, as was also Thomas Finnessey, after being carried nearly two miles by the flood. A young French child was found safe asleep on a bed in a wrecked house, in attempting to escape from which the remainder of the family perished.

One of the most singular incidents of the flood was the experience of Michael Hannegan, a meat peddler. He was driving through the main street when warned of the near approach of the flood by C. S. Warner, who assisted him in unfastening his horse from the butcher's cart and volunteered to lead it to a place of safety. Mr. Hannegan, however, insisted on sticking to the place with his horse, thinking the water would soon subside, while Mr. Warner struggled waist-deep in water to the neighboring bank. The luckless butcher was soon overcome by the waves, however, and, clambering on to a pile of lumber was carried a considerable distance to a sharp turn in the river, when he grasped a tree and clambered among its branches and was safe.

Charles Brady was carried nearly a mile on a pile of debris, finally landing in a tree from which he was recovered alive, but insane.

Miss Carrie Bonney and Mrs. Sarah J. Ryan and child, who were among those swept away and lost, had ample time to save themselves, but were completely stupefied with terror, and, with a fixed stare, stood motionless.

Most of the cars of the Canal road were caught on the northeast side of the break at Leeds, but a train of rough cars was made up, and it ran back and forth, carrying searchers for lost friends, provisions for the unfortunate and blankets and spreads for both living and dead.

Frederick Clough, foreman at Warner's button factory, was one of the few persons in the village who did not lose his presence of mind, but by coolness and calculation aided in saving a number of lives. A young child of Mrs. Sarah J. Ryan and a granddaughter of Mrs. Bonney were carried to places of safety by him, while he also managed to spread a very general alarm in the two or three minutes which elapsed after the first alarm was sounded.

Tommy Fennessy, a 10-year-old son of James Fennessy, who, with his wife and two of his children, perished in the flood, got separated from his parents when the house was first struck by the wave, and, clinging to a pile of lumber, floated half way to Florence, when he was rescued by James Lanby, who imperiled his own life by wading far into the current.

Nicholas J. Bagley of Fitchburg, a young Englishman, postponed his usual Christmas visit to his mother, Mrs. Bagley, at Leeds, until May, so as to come when it was a pleasant season. As usual his wife started a few days in advance, coming on Thursday. Her husband followed on Saturday, but only to find the village in ruins and his wife a corpse. Mrs. Bagley was 29 years old, and had been married eight years. The elder Mrs. Bagley lived with her son-in-law, Walter Humphreys. Mrs. Nicholas Bagley was on the piazza of the house when the flood came and swept her away. Mrs. Humphreys saved her children by holding them above the water. Mr. Humphreys was at his post as engineer at the factory of George P. Warner, from which



THE FAITHFUL DOG.



IDENTIFYING THE DEAD.

he escaped on the roofs of houses and finally was rescued by selectman Quigley's daughter.

Charles E. Stevens, one of the efficient relief committee at Leeds, had a very narrow escape at the office of the Northampton Emery Wheel company, where he was busy at his ledger at the time of the flood. Glancing out of a window facing up the river, he saw the avalanche of waters, then almost upon him. A second later, the books were thrown into the safe, the combination lock turned; and glancing an eye through the factory to see that all had escaped, Mr. Stevens fled across the bridge to the canal, over which the flood was pouring and reached the safe harbor of Mr. Field's farm house on the high land. Mr. Field was in his lumber mill as the courier came with the news, and ran into the silk mill to give the warning. Gen. Otis, the manager of the emery works, at the time of the flood was in New York, on his return from the reunion of the Army of the Potomac at Harrisburg, and, in response to a telegram, hastened from the recount of war scenes to behold this no less appalling disaster of flood. The damage to the Emery Wheel company will not exceed \$1500.

Peculiarly sad was the loss of Mr. Eli Bryant and his grandchild, little Robbie Hayden. They lived on the south side of the river, at the extreme southern end of the village of Skinnerville. Capt. Hayden was on the other side of the river, some distance away. His wife, hearing the alarm bell ring, stepped to the door and saw the water coming. She ran for her child, who was in his night dress, and while looking for a shawl in which to wrap him, Mr. Bryant caught the boy, rushed out of the house, and climbed a ladder standing against a shed. Mrs. Hayden shouted to him to come down and flee to the high ground only a few feet distant, but while descending the ladder, the water swept both him and the boy away. They floated down only a few feet from the shore, Mrs. Hayden following along on the high bank a considerable distance, the grandfather holding the boy up above the rushing waters, the mother shouting to them, and the boy piteously crying to his mother to save him. It was one of the most heartrending scenes of this terrible calamity.

Peculiarly sad were the circumstances of Mrs. Jacob Hill's loss. She was, with her little son, making all haste for the bank, when in crossing a little brook she missed her footing and fell in. The little fellow reached her his hand, but she could not regain her feet, and the flood was so close upon them that the boy could only obey her last command, and run for his life. Mr. Bryant, the father of Mrs. Hayden, when he saw the flood coming, climbed a ladder into the upper story of a shed, and was carried away with it. Past his mother's sight, but she was as powerless to prevent as if she had been in heaven, floated little Robbie, crying to be saved. It could not be.

A land-mark of the flood, which will long be viewed with interest by the inhabitants of Williamsburg, is a majestic elm, which was left standing in the yard in front of the residence formerly occupied by Henry Birmingham, who was swept away with his entire family. A curious incident is that, while the grounds in the vicinity are badly washed, about a rod of the brick

walk which passed through the yard is still visible under the tree. Several young lads have set up a miniature refreshment stand under its sheltering branches, and, with characteristic Yankee shrewdness, proclaim their wares to the passers-by.

When the water was seen coming, seven persons employed in H. L. James' woolen mill at Williamsburg climbed an apple tree for safety. The tree was carried away, and every one of the seven was drowned. Mr. James, who has suffered several times by fire and flood, had a presentiment of the calamity, and stated, before leaving home, that he expected to hear, on his arrival in Europe, of some fearful disaster. It came, in fact, just seven hours before he was to sail.

The little son of Engineer Roberts of Williamsburg who, alone of all the family, was saved by clinging to a tree, will receive \$3000 from the insurance association of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, of which his father was a member. Division No. 63, of Springfield, to which Mr. Roberts belonged, has passed appropriate resolutions on his death.

While Charles Hooker, a Hadley farmer, was passing across a meadow between Florence and Leeds, the day after the disaster, a box containing money was found, and a gang of thieves and robbers of the dead insisted on a division of the treasure among the group, Hooker being offered a share if he would keep the finding of the box a secret. He at once rejected their overtures and defied their threats, and it was due to his courage and honesty that the box was delivered over to the authorities. It was found to contain several hundred dollars in money, besides valuable papers, the whole belonging to John Kaplinger of Haydenville.

A sincere mourner at Haydenville is the noble dog of Joel Hayden, the pet and playmate of all the children of the village, and especially fond of Mr. Ira Bryant, the father of Mrs. Col. Hayden, who was among the lost. While the search for dead bodies was going on Sunday, his expression of grief was unmistakable, and remaining articles of Mr. Bryant's clothing received his special attention. Sunday afternoon he started out and followed the searchers for bodies on the meadow lands. Monday forenoon he was seen on Miller's flat pawing in the sand, and when he was visited it was found he had dug quite a trench. In this excavation were the lower portions of a man's limbs, the toes of the boots being upturned. They could hardly have been more than half way exposed to view when the dog discovered them. The next half hour revealed the form of Mr. Bryant. As the workmen prosecuted their digging around the body the dog lay down at their feet. As the face was exposed, he seemed for a second overjoyed, but when a cloth was wrapped around the rigid form and the removal was begun, the faithful animal seemed bowed with grief, and sullenly followed the little party home. Diligent search, of course, had been made for these remains. It is hardly possible any human being would have found the imbedded corpse.

THE CORONER'S INQUEST.

Soon after the search for the dead was commenced, Coroner Ansel Wright of Northampton, summoned a jury of inquest, to inquire into the cause of the death of John Atkinson, one of the victims of the disaster. This inquiry naturally opened up the whole subject of the reservoir, the treacherous dam, the culpability of the proprietors and the contractors, and the responsibility of all persons in any way connected with the subject. The jury consisted of Capt. Enos Parsons, foreman, of Northampton, by profession a lawyer; George W. Hubbard of Northampton, President of the Smith Charities; John Mayher of East Hampton, agent of the East Hampton Pump Company, and a practical machinist; Silas S. Hubbard of Hatfield, a tobacco dealer and farmer; Hiram Nash of Williamsburg, farmer; Dr. Wm. M. Trow of Haydenville, physician. The Coroner and jurors made a private examination of the ruins of the reservoir and dam, and were evidently surprised to find that it was such a flimsy affair. A measurement of the stone wall at various points showed that it was nowhere wider than five feet and six inches, and the average width was about five feet and three inches. Energetic and persistent probing failed to reveal any "hard pan" under that portion of the dam which was undermined and gave away, nor was any found under much of the wall now standing. Several specimens of the cement used in building the wall were examined, and it was found that much of it was easily crumbled between the fingers, while contact with water resolved it very speedily into sand. A juror found little difficulty in loosening almost any small stone in the dam, by a judicious use of the crowbar, and without exerting any considerable degree of strength.

The jury met at the court-house in Northampton on Monday, May 25, and proceeded to take the testimony of witnesses. George Cheney, the gate-keeper, was first called. He testified that he visited the dam shortly after 6 o'clock Saturday morning, and saw nothing unusual. He went in to breakfast, and as he was moving away from the table he saw the earthworks moving off on the east side, for a distance of 40 feet, from the bottom to a point about two thirds of the way up. He ran down and opened the gate. The water was then coming out in small streams, and a heavy slide of earth occurred. He got his horse, mounted it, and started for the village as fast as he could go. He was about ten minutes in getting there; spent three or four minutes in talking with Spellman, who at first did not believe the report. When he did believe it he sent the witness to Belcher's livery stable, where he met Collins Graves. Belcher said: "For God's sake, Graves, turn your horse, drive down, and let them know it." Graves turned and started in his buggy at once toward Haydenville. He (Cheney) mounted at once and drove after Graves, but did not overtake him; the flood cut him off within 200 yards, and he turned back. He testified further that he had been gate-keeper for two and one-half years, and had seen small streams of water running through ever since he had been there, throughout its whole length,

mostly at the bottom, and there was one good stream within a rod or two from the pipe, the outlet being as large as a man's arm. He had spoken to Mr. Dimock of the Reservoir company, and agent of the Nonotuck silk company, at Leeds, during last summer, and Mr. Dimock had said that he thought it was nothing more than a spring; had often spoken to Mr. Spellman, secretary of the Reservoir company and button manufacturer at Williamsburg, about these streams. A load or two of earth had caved off a year ago this spring, and had never been repaired. The reservoir had been full two or three weeks. Cheney testified that Mr. Spellman had employed him for \$200 a year, to open and shut the gates. He had few directions. He was to give notice when anything was wrong. He worked at farming wherever he could get a job. The Reservoir company made no requirement as to what substitute he should leave at the reservoir while gone; his wife was in charge at such times. None of the owners have visited the dam in times of danger. Mr. Dimock had examined it last year; he had not called any special attention to it this year.

There was a thrill through the audience when Collins Graves was called to give his testimony. He proved to be a young man, probably under 30, with a well knit figure of medium height, a quiet, strong, honest face, and a demeanor that was even shy. He was going his round in his buggy, peddling milk, when he noticed Cheney ride into Belcher's stable yard with such an anxious look on his face that he drove in after him to find what the matter was. He said to Cheney, "George, what's the matter?" Cheney replied, "The reservoir is giving way." "Do you mean it?" said Graves. "Yes," replied Cheney, "I do." Then Graves said, "Well, if that's so, somebody's got to let them know it. You, George, warn the folks here, and I'll drive down the river," and with the words he started. He gave the first alarm at James's woolen mill, telling Tom Brazil that the reservoir had broken away and he must alarm the hands and hunt up Mr. Birmingham and warn him. Then he drove on to Skinnerville, met Mr. Skinner, and told him. He cried aloud as he passed every house, but met no person on the road between Williamsburg and Skinnerville. He met Nash Hubbard at the door of the silk factory, and called out, "The reservoir's given way and is right here. All you can do is to get away." He also met George F. Smith, and told him. Thaddeus Bartlett, Mr. Kaplinger, and a boy were told the same news in a breath. All this while, he had not seen nor heard the flood. On he went. At Hayden, Gere & Co.'s office he left the same word as at Skinner's. He drove on to Hart's barber shop, and thence to Deacon Elam Graves's store, when he turned back. He first saw the flood as he got into the dugway above the brass works, bearing down upon him; and again turning down the river, he drove this time to the hotel and told Loomis, the landlord, who then got his horses out of the barn, and had hardly done it before the dam was gone. Mr. Graves was questioned as to his meeting any person on the way, and said he met Jerome Hillman, on horseback, coming from Skinnerville, just as he entered the dugway to go thither; that he caught sight of Hillman and the great wave at the same time, and heard him call out, "Turn

around; the reservoir is right here!" he escaped the flood by driving up over the railroad track by the church, and saw the houses and shops go down. When he once more reached Capt. Kingsley's near the dugway, everything had been swept away, the time being, he should think, some six or eight minutes. He gave the alarm all along his way, but he could not tell whether all the people heard him. The general alarm at Skinnerville was given by ringing the factory bell, which struck as he started away.

The examination in regard to the dam elicited the facts, beyond a doubt, that it was shabbily constructed, that the contractors gave no thought to the subject of safety, and that self-interest was the ruling motive with all who were directly interested in it. The result has shown how short-sighted was their policy. The proprietors and contractors were examined at length, and very searchingly. The proprietors held that the amount paid was sufficient to construct a permanent dam at that place; while the contractors claimed that it was not; and argued that, if a poor dam was to be built, they might as well do it as anybody; and that the amount cleared was none too much, it being from \$5000 to \$6000. We add a part of the testimony of Contractor Bassett as a curiosity, as well as a matter of great interest in the investigation. How any one recognized as a man, in a Christian community, can speak thus standing exposed to the gaze of public scrutiny, is a wonder.

The manner of the man was defiant and combative to the last degree, and he did not alter it, though brought to admit, in detail, that even the loose specifications under which the partners worked were not adhered to. He was with the jury at the reservoir, the day before. Asked if he did not then see the original earth, full of roots, under where the embankment was, extending now down to within two feet of the wall, he said he didn't know it was within two feet, but confessed that he saw it all the way from four feet to 30; the original earth was evidently not removed down to hard-pan. There were a few roots left in it, but they had plowed the surface over, hauled out the alder roots by cattle, he thought, and scraped off the top from 18 inches to two feet in depth. The work suited Engineer Fenn, and he accepted it; at least he didn't say they should do any more. They didn't think they were bound to do any more than would gain the superintendent's acceptance. The jury persisted in requiring Bassett to say whether he thought the work done in conformity with the specifications; and, after many evasions, he said he thought it was at the time, but he found some muck left now, and finally said that there was mucky and fibrous material all through the space, these specifications required cleared, but he didn't see many roots as big as his finger. As for the embankment, they didn't pick all the roots out of that, he supposed. The contractors knew, when they built the dam, that there were springs under the embankment. They took no pains to divert them, and couldn't tell where they would go to.

Bassett's conscience was at this point the subject of inquiry. He had had doubts about the dam's standing on account of the slope of the inner embankment. Did he hesitate because of this fear? No, he didn't know that he did. Did he know that great loss of property, and perhaps loss of life, would

result if it should break away? Yes, he s'posed he did. He didn't absolutely protest against the change of the 18-inch pipe to a 16-inch; they ought not to have taken the risk; if it hadn't been for the change, they would have made about \$8000; he wanted to explain, however, that his and Wells's time were not counted in in reckoning their profits, which would make a slight difference. Didn't know that they should have stopped out of consideration for property and life. Dr. Trow queried, "There wasn't a great deal of conscience in that?" and Bassett answered, "I don't know what you mean by conscience; I don't know why conscience should hinder me. If the dam had to be built, I don't know why we shouldn't just as well build it as anybody else." There ensued a long questioning on the subject of other badly done portions of the work, and quite a discussion of grouting, which he said was never impervious to water, and he didn't know as the specifications required that it should be. Then the witness, being asked if he had a right to build a dam that he knew to be unsafe, replied, "I don't know but I have, if they want such a dam." The dam was accepted, January 11, 1866; Messrs. Clement, William Clark, Jr., and Lucius Clark, Dimock, Spellman and Hayden were present. When he and his partner took the contract, they expected Mr. Fenn to oversee it; they had no high esteem for Mr. Gardner as an engineer; they felt that the directors put extra confidence in them, and they had paid for it—they had had to spend money to protect themselves. He expected the dam to go within the first year if it was left so. They meant to have made more money on it; has known jobs to pay a good deal better.

Some of the ablest engineers and dam builders in the State were called as experts, including Wilson of Boston, Smith of Springfield, Raymond of Fitchburg, and Ball of Worcester. The testimony was entirely unanimous in condemnation of the dam and the manner of its construction. Indeed it was tacitly, if not directly, admitted by the contractors themselves, that it was faulty, and not such an one as the situation required.

Mr. George Raymond, the engineer from Fitchburg, said respecting the general character of the materials, he had only to say that they were entirely unfit for such a structure; and this is only the essence and summing up of all the testimony.

Action of the Massachusetts Legislature.

Monday, May 18th, the State Legislature appointed a joint committee, in compliance with a petition signed by citizens of Northampton, Williamsburg, and 86 others, to visit the scene of the disaster, and devise measures of relief. The committee consisted of Senators Edson of Hampshire, Nye of the Island district, and Bardwell of Essex; and Representatives Billings of Hatfield, Blunt of Haverhill, Wilson of Boston, Bosworth of Taunton, Robinson of Chicopee, Jenkins of Abington, Jones of Spencer and Howes of Reading. The next day the committee, with members of the Northampton

relief committee, went up the valley in carriages, visiting points of interest along the stream. They went through Florence, Leeds, Haydenville, Skinnerville and Williamsburg, proceeding at once to the broken reservoir, arriving there at about two o'clock.

Among those who had joined in along the way were prominent men from the several villages, and the contractor and engineer by whom the reservoir had been constructed, Joel Bassett of Easthampton and Emery Wells of Northampton. At the reservoir there was a good deal of excitement among the heavy losers who were present. The original contract and specifications were read, and, at the conclusion, the contractor began to endeavor to prove that his work had been done faithfully according to agreement. One of the provisions was that the stone wall which ran across the river in the center of the embankment should have a foundation resting on the solid rock. Mr. Bassett was endeavoring to show that this had been complied with, when Col. Henry W. Wilson of the committee stepped forward and said: "Mr. Bassett, that provision was not complied with; the witness is at your feet in that loose earth, and the testimony is against you." Col. Wilson then took the specifications and showed to the committee in what they had not been complied with, showing himself to be a master of the subject which he was discussing. The most important thing that he showed was that the dam was forty feet less in thickness than was agreed upon. He also showed that the central wall, upon which so much dependence had been placed, had not been built upon solid rock, but on the loose earth, so that, of course, the water could work under it. At the conclusion of Col. Wilson's statement, Mr. Skinner, who has lost a handsome fortune, walked up to Mr. Bassett and Mr. Wells and said: "Look here; if you want to know what I think of you two, I'll tell you that you ought to have a rope around your necks, and something ought to be done with the rope, too."

The joint committee having reported favorably on the petition for state aid, the Legislature passed a law granting the credit of the state to the amount of \$100,000, for repairs of roads and bridges in Williamsburg, while no appropriation was made for such repairs in Northampton. Provision was also made for an abatement of taxes on damaged real estate, granting for that purpose \$5000 to Williamsburg and \$2000 to Northampton.

RELIEF FOR THE SUFFERERS.

Scarcely had the fateful torrent accomplished its devastations, when the telegraph had carried the news to every part of the country, and the reverberation brought back expressions of sympathy in generous offers of substantial aid. The towns nearest the scene of devastation rushed to the rescue at once, and did all in their power to alleviate the wretchedness and sorrow which prevailed. On the following day, contributions were taken in most of the churches in New England, and also in many other places. Contributions

in money, and also in food, clothing, and house-furnishing goods, have constantly been pouring in from all quarters. There is hardly a town in the state that has not contributed, and the response from the neighboring states has been general.

Mr. Lewis Bodman of Northampton, was chairman of the general relief committee, to which most of the contributions have been forwarded. The money received by this committee is \$70,000, while more remains to come in. Accounts of the subscriptions of some of the more prominent places are appended, but it is impossible to specify all. Boston has been prompt and liberal; and has sent committees to ascertain the cases of special need. Her subscriptions are up to \$26,000 in money, which has not all come in; also, mattresses, bedding, new clothing, &c., to a large amount. The St. Andrew's Masonic Lodge of Boston was first to respond, and sent \$1000. Springfield has contributed nearly \$5000, East Hampton about \$2000, Holyoke over \$3000, while Westfield, Chicopee and other towns in the valley have given very liberally. The bulk of the New York City subscriptions, from \$6000 to \$7000, were sent through C. H. & F. D. Blake, Commission Merchants.

One notable contribution is a subscription of \$2600 raised by H. C. Meyer & Co. and others at New York, and sent to Hayden, Gere & Co., at Haydenville, for the benefit of their employes. Messrs. Meyer & Co. are New York neighbors of Hayden, Gere & Co., and are in the same line of business, and this is one of the pleasantest amenities of trade.

There have been a large number of private contributions sent in, among them the following:

Benjamin F. Butler, \$500; Thurlow Weed, \$100; George Bliss of New York, \$1000; Adams express company, \$500; Alvah Crocker of Fitchburg, \$500; Holyoke water-power company, \$500; M. M. Gaylord of Northampton, \$300; The Williams manufacturing company of Northampton, \$200; E. C. Bodman of Toledo, O., \$200; E. H. R. Lyman of New York, \$200; J. H. Butler of Northampton, \$300; R. G. Clark, \$250; Amidon Lane & Co. of New York, \$200; W. B. Hale of Northampton, \$200; Dr. S. A. Fisk of Northampton, \$200; W. Hillyer of Northampton, \$100; Judge C. E. Forbes of Northampton, \$100; G. W. Hubbard of Northampton, \$200; J. H. Lyman of Northampton, \$200; Other Northampton subscriptions, \$439; J. H. McMullen of Biddeford, Me., \$100; Mr. Morgan of Saco, Me., \$100; Senator W. B. Washburn of Greenfield, \$200; Coe brass manufacturing company of Wolcottville, Ct., \$100; William Wright & Co. of Williamsburg, N. Y., \$100; W. & B. Douglas of Middletown, Ct., \$100; Monson granite works, \$200; Gov. Thomas Talbot of Billerica, \$200; Mrs. Talbot of Billerica, \$100; Jesse W. Starr of Camden, N. J., \$500; Clapp & Pomeroy of Lee Center, Ill., \$50; George W. Campbell of Pittsfield, \$100; Richard Goodman of Lenox, \$50; John Bertram of Salem, \$100; Roland Mather of Hartford, \$100; J. J. Lathrop of Northampton, \$100; Henry L. Dawes of Pittsfield, \$100; H. L. Pierce of Boston, \$500.

"JOHN PAUL'S" SKETCH OF THE DISASTER.

We introduce a letter from "John Paul" to the New York Tribune, which describes the scene of the calamity so accurately, and so vividly that it brings before the mind's eye of those who have not seen it, a true and reliable representation, and will be interesting to every reader:

WILLIAMSBURG, MASS., May 21.—Four times within the year have I been at Williamsburg—once but a fortnight ago. No need to describe Williamsburg as it then was to any who have ever passed through Massachusetts or Connecticut, for to have seen one of these little manufacturing villages is to have seen all. Nestling down wherever there is enough water to turn a wheel, they dot the green banks with their white cottages, measure the pulse-beats of time with the swifter and equally regular throbs of their ponderous hammers, make the night as well as the day alive with the hum of their busy industries, and tangle the tops of their tall chimneys in among church spires. If "to labor is to pray," the mingling is not incongruous, for the chimney of a work-shop must in logical sequence be very nearly akin to a steeple, the ringing of anvils to that of church bells!

One who now for the first time visits these villages of the valley cannot "realize" the change which that brief, terrible half hour, with the details of which you are all familiar, wrought. He will come, for instance, upon naked areas of territory where nothing seems to have been destroyed, simply because there is no evidence to lead you to suppose that anything ever existed. To mention one case in point, he will find a long reach of plain, covered with sand and bowlders, over which a stream trickles in irregular channels—you do not know that this waste but five days since was a fertile meadow, for there is nothing to show that it has not been as it now is since the first flood. In another case, picking your way along over broken ground, where never a wheel seems to have rolled, how is the stranger to know that he is in reality threading what was a main street, along the line of which stood the usual array of houses. Even I, who should be somewhat familiar with the old localities, stood on a piece of low ground just outside the village of Williamsburg, as I supposed, over which the water had evidently swept, and remarked to a bystander what a fortunate thing it was that no one had builded there. To my surprise he informed me that I was standing near the junction of two streets, and on ground once covered with houses. Twenty-six dwellings were swept away in this vicinity alone, and with them fifty-seven human beings were borne to destruction. Inquiring what some twisted leaden pipes were which at odd intervals protruded from the ground and spouted water into the air in an apparently aimless way, I was told that they once led spring water into the kitchens of houses which had gone away from over them, and of which no other trace remains.

I have heard the devastation here wrought compared to that occasioned by a great fire. Fire leaves vestiges of what it consumes—ashes at least; in the path of this fierce flood you find patches of naked sand upon which you would

swear that nothing ever stood, and yet at the very moment, perhaps, are standing in a depression that last Saturday morning was the cellar of a substantial dwelling. Destruction is not the word; annihilation alone can describe it, and scarcely adequately at that. Compare this fearful work with that wrought by a fire, indeed. When fire comes you have something to fight; you can stay and defend your property until the flames die out or the rafters fall in. When this avalanche of water dashed down upon Williamsburg there was nothing to do but run for it, and fortunate indeed was the father or mother with children in arms that could run fast enough to find safety. Fancy the swiftness of destruction, when the bell which rung to warn the inhabitants came near being whirled from the belfry and carried along on the crest of the torrent with its first stroke choked upon its iron lips, and the bellman had to drop the rope and take to the hills. Even he who on a swift horse flew through the valley shouting "Fly! for your lives, fly!" could not stop to gather a breath or say to the wondering dwellers along the stream why they should fly or where they should fly to, for death roared at his horse's heels, and to pause for one instant was to be overtaken and overwhelmed.

The suddenness and completeness of the fate which came upon Hierculaneum and Pompeii is thought to be marked by the bread and roasted meats found in ovens. Here you may see ovens with unbaked loaves therein—loaves that did not even have time to brown before the fire was extinguished and both stove and kitchen carried into another village.

If I have now in any degree made you understand the suddenness and completeness of the catastrophe which came upon Williamsburg and its sister hamlets, I have brought you to a point at which I myself have not yet arrived, though in addition to the accounts which have met my eye and all I have heard from eye-witnesses, I am personally upon the ground and have explored it thoroughly in every direction.

Can you imagine or enter into the feelings with which I now seat myself to write what I have seen, the sensation akin to despair of its accomplishment which comes upon me as I contemplate the task? For two days I have been wandering through a desert where but yesterday, as it were, I left a garden; for two days I have been dwelling amid desolation, and yet this very spot where even the trees are now uprooted, when I before was here, blossomed with thrift, was hung on every side with the ripened fruits of industry. Sad women on every side you see, going about in black, but of the bereaved the greater number by far have no black to wear, for with the bereavement came the loss of all that could enable them to symbolize it outwardly. Of friends whom I loved, and whose hospitalities I have received, some are utterly ruined; others have lost what it will take them years to regain; others still are in suspense and do not know whether or not they are worth a dollar among them all. Is it strange, then, that I take up my pen as one might who dreams that he but dreams and is going to put upon paper that which he will find blotted out on awakening; to record what he hopes and almost believes will turn out to be but a distressing vision which came with the night and will vanish with the day?

You remember it was claimed for a clergyman once, as a reason for giving him a "call," that he was "powerful in prayer, and especially happy at funerals." Now funerals never were a source of much enjoyment to me, and the funeral of several whole villages at once I hope never again to attend.

My attention was just now called to a man evidently bearing an overburdening sorrow about with him. His face had the restless look you have seen on the faces of those haunted by a great grief, who go about with wistful eyes which seem to ask of strangers if they know not some way in which they may turn for escape. A wife, two children and a home he had, and lost them all at the first swoop of the torrent. There are different ways of viewing things. Mr. Birmingham, for instance, the superintendent of the James woolen mills, perished in the flood, with his wife and three children. I have seen this alluded to as "the most dreadful case of all." Not so dreadful to my thinking as the instance mentioned above, and similar ones which I could recite. Grief remains with those who are left behind, and when all are taken there are none left to mourn. Anything but the separation of families, husband taken from wife, wife from husband, children from parents, or, worst of all, children left to the cold fatherhood of a preoccupied world.

We arrived at Williamsburg late at night. So dark was it that from the car-windows we could see nothing of the ruin that had been wrought along the line of road near the village. On getting out the same station met us. The only thing unusual that we noticed was the arrival on the same train which brought us of a company of soldiers, in blue overcoats and carrying muskets, who filled the only wagon that was in waiting, so we had to pick our way to the village as best we might. The James woolen mill was standing and looking much the same as ever when we passed it, picking our way over stumps and bowlders, and occasionally wading over streams, and I remarked that the disaster seemed to have been much exaggerated. True, we found few or no houses between the station and the village, but I accounted for this by supposing that we had somehow lost our way and were blundering along through the fields, though I could remember no such peculiar geological formations as we were stumbling over. That the whole surface soil had been skinned off, exposing the raw clay and gravel below, was an idea which never occurred to me. And I found the house of the friend who insisted on my making that house my headquarters with a natural hospitality which a dozen floods could not quell, intact and unchanged, as were all the houses immediately surrounding it. Church, post-office, Lyman James's store, there they all stood unharmed. For this portion of the village, lying along this tine of the fork whereof Mill River represents the handle, was untouched. Early in the morning myself and companions were up and out, and a very few steps brought us into the midst of a scene of devastation which I have already hinted at, but which no pen is competent to describe. With our starting point I was familiar, and could now form some idea of what had occurred. Rather a faint one at first, however, for standing on the very sites of the grist mill and carriage shop, I asked what part

of the village they were in; it seemed to me I must be mistaken in supposing that they were ever situated where I then stood.

One of the freaks of the flood seems to have been the lifting bodily of buildings and moving them a considerable distance, then to set them down as squarely as they were set on their original foundations. There is one barn in particular, Culver's, I think, which has been so moved. You almost refuse to be persuaded that it has been moved by any accidental agency, yet it stands rods from the place where it was built.

In some instances houses have been protected by single trees which stood in front of them; in others, the trees were torn up and became missiles of destruction. In the trees which the flood strewed along its path you see evidence of the violence of the torrent; huge pines lie stripped of their bark and branches, and with their bleached roots twisted and torn into splints, they look to be gigantic brooms.

Of the amount of debris—surface earth, sand, and brushwood brought down and deposited—you will get some idea when I tell you that several of the bodies which have been recovered were found buried 20 feet below these accretions. And I fear me that all the mischief is not ended; like the fabled monster of old, a flood slays with its breath, and unless malignant fevers prevail in this valley through the Summer, there is nothing in precedent. This has been the case in all fresh-water floods of which I have any recollection; terrible, is it not, to think that to such a testament of destruction there is still a codicil of death attached!

The scene around the Haydenville brass foundery reminds one of placer-mining in the early days of California. Workmen with pick and shovel excavate the sand and sift it carefully, exhuming, not nuggets of gold, but metals that glitter similarly—ingots of copper and brass, and silver-plated goods. But the mining going on of the huge piles of debris at which men are digging and hewing, and hauling, is of a more terrible character. It is for corpses they are looking.

Strange how everything in this world seems to exist simply by comparison; that we can pronounce upon nothing absolutely in itself until we consider relative positions. As instance in point: under any ordinary circumstances my friend Henry James, proprietor of the Champion Woolen Mills, would be thought to have been strangely unfortunate. His mill is left high and dry by the changed course of the river-bed; its lower story is wrecked, his dam is torn away, the pond filled with sand, the dye-house dismantled, the woolen-shed shredded, and a large stock of wool gone; tenements for the operatives swept away, a fine piece of meadow land ruined, and, greatest misfortune of all, the services of a faithful superintendent lost. But in comparison with the loss incurred by some others Mr. James seems eminently fortunate, one set apart by the signal favor of Providence. His mill with all its valuable machinery is there, its upper stories just as they were left when the operatives fled. The looms stand with the warps in them, and full bobbins are in the shuttles, only awaiting the impetus which shall send them flying to and fro as of old. Clear the rubbish away from the lower floor, straighten up the

machinery a little, and apply power, and again rivers of cassimeres and fustians and flannels would flow over the rollers. Wife and children are around him, his house stands where it did, untouched, and looking from its windows they see but the village as it was.

In contrast with his case, take that of William Skinner, proprietor of a large silk mill which stood a mile or so lower down the river. Thirty years ago Mr. Skinner came to this country a poor boy, whose only capital was a knowledge of the silk business acquired at Spitalfields, England, where the curriculum is thorough, and the graduate can only get through by sleeping under the looms. After various vicissitudes, he succeeded in developing a large and profitable industry, and established the silk mill which, with its surroundings, made Skinnerville. He had lately finished and furnished a large dwelling house, one of the finest in the valley, on the rise of ground opposite his mill property. In 15 minutes he saw that mill property, with everything appertaining to it, go from before his eyes so cleanly that were it not for certain landmarks which could not be swept away, the proprietor himself would be puzzled to tell precisely where it stood. So completely is every trace blotted out that I imagine Mr. Skinner must sometimes regard it as merely the mill of a dream, a fancied possession, which never had even a foundation stone in fact. His house remains, but in a most shattered condition—piazzas torn away, floors burst through, books washed into pulp, and furniture ruined. Looking out of the windows he sees his empty mill site, the few tenements that have not been swept away overturned, uprooted trees, huge piles of driftwood and debris—a perfect picture of devastation and desolation. And I question if the noon of that sad Saturday, whose morning found Mr. Skinner a prosperous manufacturer and a rich man, saw him worth a dollar in the world. But lo, he gathers his wife and family all safe about him, and pointing to a man who lost wife and children and house—the latter all the property he had—who goes about dazed like one not yet thoroughly awake, he says: "In comparison I have lost nothing, and have reason to be glad it is no worse."

The foundry of Hayden, Gere & Co., at Haydenville, if not the largest, was certainly the best appointed one in the country. The offices were finished and fitted up in a way that you seldom see even in the banking establishments of large cities, and cost about \$75,000 I am told. When at Haydenville little more than 10 days ago, I asked "Jo Hayden" why he had such magnificent offices in such an out-of-the-way place, where no one could ever see them. He replied that he had an excellent opportunity of seeing them himself; spending the greater portion of his time there, he liked to have things pleasant around him. The foundry and all being constructed of brick, in the most substantial manner, it would have seemed that within such walls all the valley might have found safety, but eye-witnesses say that when the flood struck them they tottered for a moment and in the next fell crumbling and crushed; now the trophy-seeker looks for a brick to carry away almost in vain. Well, I found this same "Jo Hayden" on the ground in his business blouse, actively superintending the clearing away the rubbish and other prep-

arations for rebuilding, too busy even to figure up his loss, and receiving laborers who came to go to work much more heartily than he did men who came only to express sympathy and find out how much he is still worth. In the improvised office, bearing little resemblance to the former ones, was his partner, Gere, dictating circulars to the trade and letters to customers, telling them that the firm still had enough goods on hand to supply orders, and no interruption of business would occur.

And when I left the scene Skinner was reeling the silk off a tangled bobbin that some one had found down at Leeds and brought him—to twist into a rope for the contractors who built that dam, I hope—and manufacturer James was scouring the plains some ten miles below his mills, picking up all of his own wool and as much of anyone else's as he could find lying loose or in bales, while Spellman came down to the cars with me to prove by the fourth article of the by-laws of the Williamsburg reservoir company that he was in no wise responsible for the loss of life and property laid to his charge—which I hope he was not, and do not see that he was. But Spellman is fortunate too, comparatively. True, he has lost a button factory and a good many buttons, and he is blamed in many quarters for not paying closer attention to a work of which he says his superintendency ceased in May, 1872, but a mob was organized to hang him and did not succeed in its purpose; so even he has serious cause to congratulate himself.

Talk of this valley and these men being “wiped out!” You could not wipe out the industry and business energy which has abiding place here with a dozen such floods; brains survive even capital. This valley will rattle again with clang of mill wheels and the click of shuttles. It is not charity these men want, just now, but help. Help to clear up the rubbish that half buries them, rebuild their manufactories, that this same Mill River that overrode them may be again chained down to its proper and peaceful work of turning wheels; help to feed and clothe operatives for whom there is neither food nor raiment in the valley, until a new field for their producing power can be found. Brought to their knees a moment by this sudden blow—which would permanently floor hearts less stout—these men only want to be helped to their feet now; let this be done for them, and they themselves will take care of the rest. Their money when they had it was held with no niggard hand; much of it came here to New York, and from New York much of it should now go back to them. So far I see the names of no hotel-keepers on the subscription lists. Have those who absorb so much money from men like those who now lose heavily, none to spare when such calamities come?

It must be remembered that this Mill River disaster is not the sensation of a day; it means in its full interpretation suffering for months, struggling for years. And more than a spurt of sympathy, a spasm of subscription, is needed. The Lord loves a cheerful giver, and he who gives quickly gives twice; if on the heels of his first giving he gives again, by the progressive ratio which follows he gives eight times.

Of the cause of the disaster I will say but a word. It has already been more than touched in *The Tribune*, but I wish to describe the work as it

shows itself to an unprofessional visitor. The "wall," instead of being set in a trench, as you doubtless have supposed that all such dam walls are, and as they certainly should be, was simply planted in earth from which the surface soil had been skinned to a trifling depth, and on which it slid as a flat-iron might on a greased skid.

Had as many gone to see it while building as have gone to see its ruins, it would never have been suffered to be built; it was only kept from falling over of its own weight, while in course of erection, by the embankments of earth that were piled up against it. The "masonry wall"—what remains of it, at least—looks not unlike the fences of loose cobble-stone which you see piled up in sections of country where decent stones are scarce, except that the interstices are filled with sand. I say sand, for I dug a lot of stuff out of the heart of the "wall" and brought away a handkerchief full of it, which any one can examine who chooses. As for "cement" there is not a trace of that nor of lime in it; such as it is it is just good enough to stuff down the throats of the contractors who did the work, and good for nothing else, and if any mild and judicial body of men wish to stuff these contractors in the way that I suggest, I shall be proud to lend a hand to the work as well as a handkerchief full of material.

JOHN PAUL.



GEORGE CHENEY'S WARNING,

At the Breaking of the Dam.

From the New York Graphic.

Ride! Cheney, ride! For close beside,
On a ghostly galloping steed,
Is a grizzly shade, in a shroud arrayed;—
Death rides behind thee! Speed!

Ride well, ride fast, for the die is cast,
And the game has been won by Death;
And he cometh now with exulting brow,
And a laugh in his icy breath.

And after him two spectres grim;
My friends, the Pale One saith—
They are come with me; good friends are we;
Destruction! Havoc! Death!

Ride fast and well, the news to tell!
Fly! Neighbors for your lives!

If ye would save from a watery grave
Your little ones and wives!

Fly! Neighbors, fly! for the flood is nigh;
It has shattered its flimsy bound;
It is coming fast as the whirlwind's blast—
Hark! hark! to its dreadful sound!

So Cheney rode, but the torrent strode
With giant steps behind;
And its fateful roar went on before,
On the wings of the morning wind.

He rode full well, but the echoes tell
Of a wail of deep despair;
For the spectral Three, with murderous glee
Were holding carnival there.



THE RIDE OF COLLINS GRAVES.

(From the Springfield Republican.)

'Tis a cloudy morn in the month of May,
And each hill and emerald plain
Has donned its spring-time's bright array
'Neath the touch of the gentle rain.
The rollicking bobolink trolls his song
In the fields where the river rolls along,
Tossing in air its snowy locks
As it leaps in its course the dripping rocks
Opposing its way in vain.

Smiling and fair is Nature's look,
The trees are putting forth leaves,
The cattle are standing knee-deep in the brook,
And the swallows dip under the eaves.
Guiding his oxen with steady hand
The farmer is plowing the meadow land,
From the open windows of factories come
The sleepy drone of the spindle's hum
And the engine's throbbing heaves.

Fair smiles the Hampshire valley, to-day,
And no tremor is in the air
To foretell the death that is on its way
And bid the people beware.
No cry is heard, not a word is said
To call them out from the river's bed,
And bid them flee from their shops and homes
E're the terrible rush of the river comes
Like a lion from its lair.

What is that sound from the distant hill
Where the reservoir's waters sleep,
By huge embankments prisoned and still,
Broad and frowning and deep?
'Tis the thunder's smothered growl and mutter
Or the heavy breath that the whirlwinds utter;—
'Tis nothing more, we have heard before
On the hills the thunder's ponderous roar,
And seen the wild wind sweep.

Down the road into Williamsburg
Comes a horseman, breathless and pale,
Swift as his dripping horse can urge
'Neath blows that are showering like hail.
The horse is panting, his nostrils spread
Display their lining of burning red,
His eyes stand out from their sockets deep,
His breath comes shorter at every leap
And his strength is beginning to fail.

Who is this rider, who, hatless and white,
So presses his bare-backed steed,
And, looking neither to left nor right,
Drives on at such headlong speed?
'Tis the keeper who lives on the reservoir's rim
To watch the giant that sleeps within;
And the lines of fright on his pallid face
As he urges his horse to the headlong race
Declare a terrible need.

Down into Williamsburg street he rides,
Hoarse screaming a threatening sound;
The air with its terrible echoes divides
As his horse sinks down on the ground,
While he cries from its back he still bestrides,
To the people who cluster around,—
Curious, laughing, or dreading the worst—
“Flee for your lives! The reservoir's burst!
Flee, or you all are drowned!”

Then to the message spake Collins Graves,—
“Your horse can travel no more;
And all in vain are your powers to save
The people below on the shore.
So loose my horse from my old milk-cart,
And aid me in gaining a speedy start,
For I will ride down to the towns below,

And if I escape from the water's flow
Some lives I may answer for."

A moment more and his horse is free—
He leaps with a bound to his back,
And gazing backward the stream to see,
He turns him about in his track.
Far up the valley a shapeless mass
Is struggling down through the mountain pass,—
A wall of waving, shuddering foam,
Its dread crest crowned with a snowy comb,
And its foot a sickening black.

No longer he pauses—a clatter of feet
As his horse speeds over the bridge,
And borne as on eagle's pinions fleet,
He vanishes over the ridge.
While the roaring torrent nearer sweeps,
And gaining upon him closer creeps,
Courageously plying rein and whip
He rushes on without pause or slip
O'er the road by the river's edge.

His hat is gone—his hair in the wind
Streams back from his earnest face,
And turning his head he glances behind,
Yet never relaxes his pace.
He sees the tossing of shattered beams,
And hears in the tumult the dying screams
Of those o'er whom the torrent has gushed,—
An instant more and their shrieks are hushed,
And faster he urges his race.

Oh! what a ride! a race with Death!
Death in more terrible form
Than ever rides on the simoon's breath,
Or the bolt of the thunder storm!
He hears the roar of exultant floods
As they bow like grasses the strongest woods,
And dissolve like a wreath of vapory snow
Man's strongest homes, that an hour ago
Might fear no earthly harm.

Flee to the hill-tops, Collins Graves!
In vain thy efforts will be
In the towns below the people to save
From the rush of that angry sea!

But no thought has he of danger or harm,
And his clarion voice spreads the wild alarm
As he rushes the tossing river by,
And rouses the farmers with eager cry
From the terrible waves to flee.

His brave horse struggles with panting sides
'Neath the urging of voice and rein,
As into Skinnerville now he rides,
And shouts with his might and main.
From the busy factories' open doors
The frightened body of workmen pours,
Rushes to hills on the left and right
While Graves still urges his headlong flight
And rides from the village again.

Five minutes have passed—down comes the flood
With crashing timber and beam,
And on the spot where the factories stood
Is naught but the tawny stream.
Down crumble the masses of brick and stone
By the terrible might of the tide o'erthrown,
Dissolved like hay in the furnace's breath,
As the swirl of a brook sucks a leaf beneath,—
Gone like the forms of a dream.

Down the road to Haydenville fly
Breathless rider and horse,
So swift that the river rushing by
Seems flowing back on its source.
Down the road by the stream they go,
The water licking the rocks below,
While behind them the stones but lately passed
By the rushing waves in the air are cast
And the stream is bellowing hoarse.

Haydenville lieth two miles before,—
The flood, five minutes behind,
Tearing and gnawing the crumbling shore,
Comes rushing on like the wind.
Graves, turning his head, for an instant sees
A horror of bowing and twisted trees,
Of houses tossed on the wave like ships,
Of bowlders hurled in the air like chips,
And hears the pebbles grind.

Haydenville lieth a mile below,
Four minutes behind the wave
Sweeps crashing on with a swifter flow
And a louder roar and rave.
Over the way but just now crossed
The towering mass of the flood is tossed,
Gulping down in its hungry maw
The solid road like a line of straw
In the wreck of that yawning grave.

Louder and closer the river's roar,
Swifter and nearer its flow,
And with its surges it melts the shore
Which was crossed three minutes ago.
Louder and louder the brave horse pants
As he rushes along like a flying lance,
While the rider, guarding 'gainst stumble and fall,
Hears just behind him the torrent brawl,
And the town half a mile below.

The river is rising beneath their feet
And climbing the rocky wall,
Two minutes behind them the billows beat
And the groaning forests fall.
Graves turns again,—the flood lies still
Within the arms of the circling hill;—
A moment only,—but seconds are life
Before that roaring tumult and strife,—
And that moment effecteth all.

Loud in the street of Haydenville
There is heard a flying cry,
And a horse comes rushing below the hill
With pain in his staring eye.
His hot flanks heave, his skin of jet
Is tiger-striped with mud and sweat;—
His strength is gone, he staggers and falls
Beneath the shade of the factory's walls,
And the tossing wave is nigh.

A minute passes,—a towering wall,
A grinding, sickening roar,
And the muddy waters fiercely fall
Like the boiling surf on the shore.
Down with a moan go stones and bricks,
The strongest braces are snapped like sticks,

And up and down in a devil's dance
The heavy beams in the tumult prance,
Then sink to be seen no more.

But where is the rider and coal-black horse
Who brought the alarm so well?
Are they swept away in the mighty course
Of that boiling, seething hell?
Oh! Heaven be praised! we saw him lead
To a place of safety his gasping steed,
And though the flood rushed over the street
And strove to tangle their flying feet,
They are living the tale to tell.

* * * * *

There is sorrow and mourning at Haydenville,
There is weeping and wailing at Leeds,
There comes a cry from Williamsburg's hill
And from Florence's grassy meads.
Yet at the mention of Collins Graves
There comes a blessing from those he saves,
And thanks are wafted above to Heaven
That its strength is always to some heart given
Whene'er the occasion needs.

The deed of Revere is graven on brass
We read of Sheridan's fame,
But another there is whom none surpass
In the glow of an honored name.
And in the future the Hampshire vale
Shall echo the fame of that wondrous tale,
And white-haired grandsires long shall tell
How bravely the hero rode and well
In the day when destruction came.

SIDNEY DICKINSON.

AMHERST, MASS., MAY 18.

AN INCIDENT OF THE GREAT FLOOD.

(From the Boston Pilot.)

No song of the soldier riding down
To the raging fight from Winchester town;
No song of a time that shook the earth
With the nation's throe at the Nation's birth;
But the song of a brave man, free from fear
As Sheridan's self or Paul Revere;
Who risked what they risked, free from strife
And its promise of glorious pay—his life.

The peaceful valley has waked and stirred,
And the answering echoes of life are heard;
The dew still clings to the trees and grass,
And the early toilers smiling pass,
As they glance aside at the white-walled homes,
Or up the valley, where merrily comes
The brook that sparkles in diamond rills
As the sun comes over the Hampshire hills.

What was it, that passed like an ominous breath?
Like a shiver of fear or a touch of death?
What was it? The valley is peaceful still,
And the leaves are afire on top of the hill.
It was not a sound, nor a thing of sense—
But a pain, like the pang of the short suspense
That wraps the being of those who see
At their feet the gulf of Eternity!

The air of the valley has felt the chill;
The workers pause at the door of the mill;
The housewife, keen to the shivering air,
Arrests her foot on the cottage stair,
Instinctive taught by the mother love,
And thinks of the sleeping ones above.

Why start the listeners? Why does the course
Of the mill stream widen? Is it a horse,
Hark to the sounds of his hoofs, they say,
That gallops so wildly Williamsburg way?

God! what was that, like a human shriek
From the winding valley? Will nobody speak,
Will nobody answer those women who cry
As the awful warnings thunder by?



AN INCIDENT OF THE GREAT FLOOD.

Whence come they? Listen! And now they hear
The sound of the galloping horse hoofs near:
They watch the trend of the vale, and see
The rider, who thunders so menacingly,
With waving arms and warning scream
To the home filled banks of the valley stream.
He draws no rein, but he shakes the street
With a shout and the ring of the galloping feet.
And this the cry that he flings to the wind:
"To the hills for your lives! The flood is behind!"

He cries and is gone; but they know the worst—
The treacherous Williamsburg dam has burst!
The basin that nourished their happy homes
Is changed to a demon—It comes! it comes!

A monster in aspect, with shaggy front
Of shattered dwellings, to take the brunt
Of the dwellings they shatter—white-maned and hoarse,
The merciless terror fills the course
Of the narrow valley, and rushing raves,
With death on the first of its hissing waves,
Till cottage and street and crowded mill
Are crumbled and crushed.

But onward still,
In front of the roaring flood is heard
The galloping horse and the warning word.
Thank God, that the brave man's life is spared!
From Williamsburg town he nobly dared
To race with the flood and to take the road
In front of the terrible swath it mowed.
For miles it thundered and crashed behind,
But he looked ahead with a steadfast mind;
"They must be warned!" was all he said,
As away on his terrible ride he sped.

When heroes are called for, bring the crown
To this Yankee rider; send him down
On the stream of time with the Curtius old;
His deed as the Roman's was brave and bold,
And the tale can as noble a thrill awake,
For he offered his life for the people's sake.

